

MAY 10, 2004

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BAGHDAD: THE SOUND OF THE FURY

LOUD AND CLEAR

MARCHING ON WASHINGTON ELEANOR SMEAL
FROM COALITION TO COMMUNITY BARBARA RANSBY
DYING TO GET \$577 A MONTH ARIEL GORE
NOTES TO A YOUNG FEMINIST DOROTHY ALLISON



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“Feminism encourages women to
leave their husbands,
kill their children,
practice witchcraft,
destroy capitalism and become lesbians.

REV. PAT ROBERTSON
1992 REPUBLICAN CONVENTION



Editorial

The Women Have It By Jessica Clark

This November, female voters in the United States will affect the lives of millions of women around the globe. ¶ While this may ring of American

megalomania, it's distressingly true: Pun-dits have zeroed in on single women voters under age 65 as the demographic most likely to turn the tide against George W. Bush.

Pollsters Stan Greenberg and Celinda Lake suggest that these historically low-turnout voters—who skew Democratic and vote less frequently than their married counterparts—could have made a crucial difference if they had cast ballots in 2000. Several groups, such as Women's Voices Women Vote, are working to bring out the country's disparate single women on Election Day. Possible lures? More female politicians, equal pay initiatives, better retirement plans, expanded health care and public pre-school programs. If courted correctly, this swing group could go to the polls and halt Bush administration schemes to control reproductive choices and women's freedom at home and abroad.

Bush launched his assault on women's rights the day he stepped into office by reinstating the Mexico City Policy, known by its detractors as the global gag rule. This policy denies funding to any NGO that offers access to abortions unrelated to health, rape or incest; provides clients with abortion information, or lobbies for the procedure's legalization. As a result,

numerous clinics funded by groups that found it unethical to provide such restricted family-planning services have been forced to close, robbing the world's poorest inhabitants of much-needed contraceptives and healthcare.

The Bush strategy at home builds on a foundation that anti-choice conservatives have spent years constructing: It's reflected in the aggressive appointment of anti-abortion judges; FDA stonewalling on over-the-counter sales of the morning-after pill, and Congressional passage in October of the ban on ill-defined late-term abortions—compounded early this year by Attorney General Ashcroft's invasive demand for hundreds of confidential abortion records.

Bush's April 1 signing of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (UVVA), which redefines the legal start of life, is another transparent effort to chip away at abortion rights. UVVA prosecutes crimes against a "child in utero," providing protections for a fertilized egg, embryo or fetus harmed in the commission of a crime. It also opens the door to criminalizing women who fail to protect "a member of the species homo sapiens, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb." Similar state-level

laws already have been used to prosecute pregnant women for such non-crimes as alcohol use, failing to escape their batterers and ignoring an obstetrician's orders.

Elevating the wellbeing of "unborn children" above the health and rights of women already here seems especially twisted, given Bush policies once children arrive. The administration has proposed slashing HUD's Lead Hazard Control program by 20 percent. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) warns that the cut could sharply increase the number of children whose ability to think and learn is harmed by exposure. The CDF also predicted that the phase-out of extended unemployment benefits would cause financial hardship for more than 600,000 families with children. Bush's 2004 budget cuts to Section 8 housing also threaten to jettison nearly a million families with children into the streets.

The March for Women's Lives on April 25 promises to escalate and focus resistance to an entire conservative apparatus that treats women's bodies as vessels and their lives as collateral damage. Marchers will demonstrate the resolve of women and their progressive allies to buttress current freedoms and to keep pushing forward. Coalition-building for the March has proved challenging, and the feminist movement has negotiated its own rocky passage these past two decades, but the time has come for women to focus on a common agenda—in Washington and at the polls. The choice is clear. ■

Letters

You're Shitting Me

Compliments to Joel Bleifuss for the excellent summary of the problems surrounding sludge ("The Sludge Hits the Fan," April 12). Four years ago when I was a reporter in rural Virginia, I wrote a series of articles about dead pets, inedible gardens, rashes, breathing problems and an incredible stench resulting from the dumping of sludge on farms. The EPA and state officials, together with the local Farm Bureau, promoted the practice as safe, despite all evidence. At the root of the problem is not just the need for us to produce less waste and process it in a manner that does not leave us with sludge to dispose of. We also need to make it possible for farmers to succeed

financially to the extent that they are not tempted by "free fertilizer" that they themselves suspect is poison.

David Swanson
Cheverly, Md.

Thanks for the sludge story. Those of us whose health is jeopardized, and whose property value is lowered, need all the exposure we can get.

After biosolids were first applied to the fields adjacent to my property last spring, the coliform in my water went from 28.8 to more than 200 (the lab I used cannot test over 200), and the E. coli went from less than 1 to 32.4. My water goes through an ultraviolet purifier, but the pollution is so massive that the system cannot handle it.



to read, "that this government of the few, by the few, for the few shall not perish from the earth, and damn the people!"

Don H. Berkebile
Mercersburg, Penn.

What a Drag

It seems Kelly Kleiman doesn't understand drag at all ("Doing Women Wrong," April 12). What's funny and entertaining about drag IS the gender bending and cross-dressing, which has amused (and empowered) people for centuries through the inversion and critical laughter of the celebration known as Carnival. In many cultures throughout history, dressing up as your social opposite has provided a social release—it twists bipolar definitions and in doing so, expresses a rejection of gender/social boundaries, as well as social hierarchies.

Furthermore, modern day queer drag is NOT "the theft of female identity"!! That is, unless you honestly feel the core of your identity is wrapped up in dresses, high-heels and makeup. Drag queens do not dress up like real-life women; they dress up like exaggerated women. What Kleiman fails to realize is that drag pokes fun at the artifice of "woman" as created and upheld by modern-day heterosexual men—big hair, exaggerated silhouettes, non-functional and ridiculous clothing in the name of "sex appeal." Drag criticizes (in an entertaining fashion) the female illusion created on the foundations of sexism. (Remember feminists in the '60s who burned their bras and threw out their heels and makeup in protest?) If drag ridicules anything, it is

In spite of the fact that both Pennsylvania's Clean Streams Law and Pennsylvania Code 271 are being violated, the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP—in truth, I think the P stands for Pollution) officials continue to deny the violation. Regardless of which state officials are contacted about the problem, the matter is referred back to the DEP, with the only result being more lies and denials. The lies have become necessary in order to cover themselves, since DEP should never have granted a permit for application on the adjacent farm, nearly 100 percent of which quickly drains into state streams.

Several problems are evident. One is that they do have to get rid of the material. Another is that many groups of people are making big money from this. All of them have the option to walk away if they come to fear the practice, but those of us who own adjacent properties not only make no money (we spend it on testing), we cannot walk away without losses due to lowered property values.

The attorney for the contractor who spreads the material has advised me that if I don't shut up, I will be charged with harassment. I say—go ahead and charge, for it will give us opponents more exposure. Corporations have rewritten the last line of the Gettysburg address

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DISCUSSION

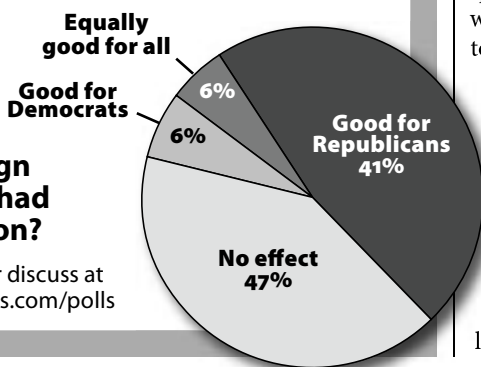
"Here go the liberals again with another conspiracy theory against Bush. Obviously our public schools are not working in most parts of the country so it is time for a change. Pay for seniority rather than merit for teachers? Sounds like another entitlement program from the Democrats. A little good competition could be good for our schools. This coming from a long-term Target employee who has had to face the challenges of Wal-Mart on a daily basis."

Join the debate at the forum for "No Choice."

POLL

MOST RECENT
What effect
have campaign
finance laws had
on the election?

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not women, but rather straight men and their silly fantasies. Let's not let feminism make us hypersensitive to everything and anything alluding to femininity. Kleiman's analysis of queer drag verges on self-victimization—I don't think most strong, forward-thinking, independent women like myself are intimidated by drag queens; nor do we look to drag queens for behavior or beauty tips. If we want social change, we must keep focused on the real things that keep women from social/economic equality: domestic violence/abuse, unplanned motherhood, the infamous glass ceiling, the career/family juggling act, sexism in the workplace, and policymakers (not drag queens) who are actively stripping us of our hard-earned reproductive rights.

Melia Patria
New York

Drag has little to do with real images of women and has little impact on the social ideas about women—who they are, what they do or how they look. It is theatre, about performance, and yes—does sometimes point up ugly stereotypes about women and gender construction.

As a feminist, and the wife of someone who is transgendered, I've yet to be offended by a drag act. That doesn't mean others aren't free to, but I think it might be better to spend our time, as feminists, improving

A Show of Socially Engaged Printmaking

Opening April 17th, 7 pm – 11 pm
at *In These Times* 2040 N. Milwaukee, 2nd floor
(Show runs April 17 – June 30, 2004) M – F 10 – 6
Contact josh@justseeds.org for more info

This exhibit will showcase print-based art engaging with the larger world via themes of social justice and global equity. Because of its accessibility and reproducibility, printmaking has long been used in struggles for freedom and social equality. This show will contain work from more than three-dozen artists. Much of the art will be in multiples available for sale at \$25 and below.

services for women, getting low-income women into college and fighting the attacks on choice that are currently rampant.

Leave the drag queens alone—even the ones who don't like women aren't the ones doing the damage.

Helen Boyd
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Are We Totally Sane?

Joel Bleifuss' "Is He Totally Crazy?" was a true statement of sanity (March 29). Ralph Nader, no matter how correct in principle and theory, is simply being wrong-headed *this time around*. He should not run. Nevertheless, Nader is eloquent, relevant, needed and should not be discounted. The hard reality, Ralph, is that ours has evolved into a Two-Party System that does, sadly, make third-party bids unviable. Given that reality, progressives

and Nader alike should heed a maxim from Aristotle: "We must as second-best ... take the least of evils first." In this instance, the lesser evil is the Democratic Party. It is there that progressives need to focus, affect a coup and revive the soul of the organization.

Nader's 2000 run was a much-needed wakeup call to the Democratic Party, which now needs to heed that call and rediscover its progressive soul. It's not just about beating Bush (though we really must). It is about fundamental change, and in that area, for too long we've had to contend with Tweedledee and Tweedledum. Nader should forgo his run in a third party and help us forge a real coup within the Democratic Party organization from the ground up.

Joe Giarratano
#118475, Red Onion State Prison
Pound, Va.

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An Iraqi oil workers union has challenged the largest subcontractor operating in Iraq.

OLEG NIKISHIN / GETTY IMAGES

Jobless Recovery

By outsourcing labor, U.S. planners of Iraqi "democracy" do not include unions. *By Jonathan Reingold*

HASSAN JUM'A IS AN IMPRESSIVE NEGOTIATOR. As head of the 10,000-member Southern Oil Company Union in Iraq, last December he successfully challenged the hiring and wage policies of Al Khorafi, a Kuwaiti subcontractor for the U.S. construction giant Bechtel and the Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR). Jum'a's union first flexed its muscles against Al Khorafi in October, when its members launched a two-day wildcat strike at the Bergeseeya oil refinery in Basra. They literally dragged out the predominantly Pakistani and Indian workforce Al Khorafi had imported and demanded that the company hire Iraqi workers in their place.

Union members also protested at Al Khorafi's headquarters, and tribal leaders topped off the strike by threatening to bomb the company's offices. Jum'a's strong-arm tactics paid off, and his union now controls access to all Southern Oil locations, barring all foreign workers and KBR representatives. Al Khorafi, the largest subcontractor in Iraq, is now doing its best

to placate the powerful union. The company is paying wages of \$125 per month—more than three times the state-enterprise minimum wage level set by Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) administrator Paul Bremer. Al Khorafi even donated wheelchairs, blankets, computers, and desks to the union and renovated a private hospital for Khorafi employees, according to Occupation Watch, an NGO in close contact with the union.

In the struggle to transform Iraq into a viable democracy, the Bush administration may be overlooking a powerful force for change: a long history of labor unionism in Iraq, on which workers already are beginning to build. Right now they face daunting obstacles, given a 1987 law that banned unions and collective bargaining in the public sector (with the exception of state-sanctioned Baathist unions, whose leaders joined in Saddam's mass killing and torture campaigns). About 70 percent of Iraq's economy is state-owned so most workers currently cannot unionize legally.

Paper, Please

Voting experts and a bipartisan ensemble of public officials are calling for paper documentation of all electronic votes cast in the November general election in case a recount or audit is required.

Fears over electronic and online voting systems stem from the possibility of systemic or localized glitches, including hacker-installed viruses or coding errors that could go unnoticed and drastically affect results. Experts from the Election Reform Information Project, a nonpartisan research group, and VerifiedVoting.org, a nonpartisan advocacy Web site, also note the possibility of decreased public confidence in the electoral process from controversial and unverifiable results.

House resolution 2239, introduced by Rep. Rush Holt (D-N.J.), and Senate bill 2045, introduced by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), would amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) by mandating voter-verified, hard copies for all electronic ballots cast in November. Passed with strong support of the Bush administration, HAVA requires all states to replace by 2006 punch-card and lever balloting with electronic machines.

HAVA immediately drew fire from watchdog organizations concerned with the conflicts of interests represented by the machine makers and the lack of paper trail they produce. Additionally, HAVA has failed to deliver most of the \$3.9 billion in funding to help states meet the new standards.

The two proposals would resolve this lack of funding by immediately increasing appropriations to help states carry out the upgrades. More than 130 Senate and House sponsors have signed on to the legislation, but neither has been sent to the floor for votes.

State governments in Illinois, California, Maryland, Nevada and Missouri also have called for paper-trail requirements, but only Nevada expects to be ready by November.

—Brian H. Kehrl

At the end of World War I, Iraqi workers formed oil, railway and dockworker unions in the fragmented country that Winston Churchill carved out of the desert. British occupiers quashed repeated strikes during six years of occupation. Armed with a mandate to rule from the League of Nations, the British installed a Hashemite monarchy that maintained a ban on union organizing until a nationalist-led coup in 1958, in which army General Abd al-Karim Qasim assumed power. Under Qasim's watch, unions swelled in rank and number; by 1959, 250,000 workers were unionized.

In February 1963 the Baath party, aided by the CIA, overthrew Qasim. That November, when Nasserite army officers seized power, unions enjoyed five years of relative freedom until a second Baathist officer coup in 1968. Within four days, the new Baath regime arrested all union leaders and replaced them with loyal Baathists.

When Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979, he continued to suppress unions, even executing some Baathist union leaders. In 1987, Baathist unions supported Saddam's Orwellian decree: "From now on, the title 'worker' is abolished and all workers shall become official employees by the State. ... As everybody is now a government employee, there is no more need for trade unions."

Still determined to keep the idea of independent unions in Iraq alive, organizers secretly formed the Workers' Democratic Trade Union Movement in 1980, which received support from trade unions abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime, when British troops once again found themselves in Basra, Iraqi unions reemerged. In May they mounted a strike, calling for the right to organize and protesting the appointment of a Baath Party member as mayor.

In June, hundreds of Iraqi union organizers met in Baghdad and founded the Workers' Democratic Trade Union Federation. Since then, a host of unions have materialized, including the Oil and Gas Union, the Transport and Communication Union, and the Construction and Carpentry Union.

So far the CPA has taken no notice of Iraqi unionists' calls for legalization and bargaining rights, but the international labor movement has shown a keen interest. In December, the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions hosted Iraqi union representatives at a Jordan conference to discuss ways to help Iraqi labor leaders

"build new, transparent and democratic unions," according to an ILO statement.

Last fall in Basra, workers went on three strikes against occupation authorities, demanding fuel, livable wages and clean water, says Gene Bruskin of U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW). "The right to organize is fundamental to democracy," says Bruskin, and even President Bush would be hard pressed to argue otherwise.

Iraq's workforce draws on a highly educated population (Iraq boasts more Ph.Ds per capita than the United States), and has no shortage of engineers and well-trained laborers, yet unemployment is at 50 percent, according to a joint United Nations-World Bank report released in October. Instead of hiring Iraqis, the CPA and U.S. contractors are shipping in foreign laborers at a much higher cost. Their hands are tied, government and corporate officials say, because of security threats.

"We don't want to overlook Iraqis, but we want to protect ourselves," Colonel Damon Walsh, head of the CPA's procurement office, told the *Financial Times* in October. "From a force-protection standpoint, Iraqis are more vulnerable to a bad guy influence." In the same report, a Pakistani manager of a catering company for troops in Iraq said he hires Iraqis only to do the cleaning.

For now, the high cost of foreign labor due to transportation and housing expenses appears to make little difference to contractors in postwar Iraq. Although the CPA mandates that 10 percent of the half-trillion dollars in potential contract largesse go to small business subcontractors, only a fraction of even this tiny share will find its way to Iraqi workers and companies. And of the Iraqi firms that have managed to land contracts, many are tied to Pentagon favorite Ahmed Chalabi, the powerful former exile who sits on the Governing Council.

Legalizing unions in Iraq could go a long way toward preventing favoritism in the contracting process, given that unions have a vested interest in promoting transparency and accountability from their employers. Even better, the United States would help revive an Iraqi democratic tradition and secure reconstruction jobs for the many qualified Iraqi workers who grow more restless day by day. ■

JONATHAN REINGOLD has written for the *Financial Times* and is a former research assistant with the Arms Trade Resource Center at the World Policy Institute.

Fund Fight

Progressive 527s fend off Republican attacks. *By Nicholas Halverson*

ON MAY 13, A SIX-MEMBER BIPARTISAN panel of the Federal Election Commission (FEC) will decide whether Democrat-affiliated groups pushed McCain-Feingold campaign finance laws beyond the intention of the law—which could fundamentally reshape their fundraising efforts this election season.

The vote comes after months of GOP complaints that Democratic groups are circumventing finance laws by using massive soft money contributions to undermine the Bush reelection strategy.

Most recently, the Bush camp and the Republican Party accused Senator John Kerry and several Democratic organizations of violating the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA or McCain-Feingold). Republicans claim that “527” groups such as MoveOn.org Voter Fund, the Media Fund and America Coming Together are illegally in cahoots with the Kerry campaign by

purchasing television advertisements that support the Democratic candidate.

Falling under the section of federal tax code that named them, 527s are able to collect unlimited contributions of soft money from corporations, labor unions and independent donors. Political neutrality is required, however, in order for these groups to fund voter drives and TV commercials. As long as they don’t directly coordinate with a political party, these groups are free to use unlimited contributions however they please.

If the FEC deems the 527’s political initiatives as too collaborative, unrestricted million-dollar contributions will be curbed and individual donations will be limited to \$5,000. Corporate and labor union contributions also would be barred under this ruling.

As of March 22 the Bush campaign had raised \$158 million compared to the Kerry campaign’s \$41 million. Republicans now

claim that groups like the Media Fund, run by former Clinton White House aide Harold Ickes, are operating a “shadow” Democratic Party by airing \$5 million worth of anti-Bush television ads.

Media Fund spokeswoman Sarah Leonard writes off the allegations as “vintage Republican intimidation tactics.”

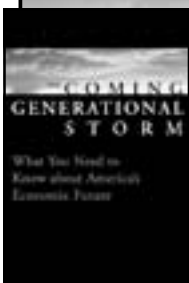
And heads of 527s vehemently deny they have broken any laws.

“We do not coordinate with the Kerry campaign,” says Wes Boyd, president of the MoveOn.org Voter Fund. “These charges are baseless and irresponsible.”

This is not the first time Republicans have gone after 527s. Last November, Republican National Committee Chairman Ed Gillespie wrote letters to campaign finance watchdogs urging them to investigate the groups. House Republicans also sought to limit the groups’ activities by holding House Administration Committee hearings and threatening the use of subpoenas.

Those in the 527 community demurred, however, arguing that the GOP was merely using its legislative authority to shut down the operation or, failing that, again steal from the Democratic playbook. ■

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— Paul A. Samuelson, MIT, Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences (1970)



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Brian K. Obach

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And Justice for All?

Department of Justice seeks to weaken law protecting human rights. **By Brian H. Kehrl**

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT for the first time is examining the validity of opening federal courts to foreigners, and what Congress intended when it drafted a nondescript, sentence-long law more than 200 years ago that has been used recently to defend international victims of human rights abuses.

On March 30 the High Court heard arguments on two combined cases involving the Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789 (ATCA), a law interpreted to allow foreign victims of human rights violations the ability to sue in federal court. The cases involve a Mexican doctor who was arrested and brought to the United States by Mexican nationals hired by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).

Dr. Humberto Alvarez-Machain was charged in 1990 with participating in the murder of a DEA agent in Mexico but was acquitted after two years of court battles for lack of evidence. The presiding judge called the government's charges "wild hunches and speculation" when he dismissed the case.

Alvarez-Machain returned to Mexico and filed suits against the U.S. government and Francisco Sosa, a Mexican policeman hired by the DEA for the kidnapping.

A federal district court in Los Angeles dismissed the suit against the government but ruled in favor of Alvarez-Machain in the suit against Sosa and awarded the doctor \$25,000 in damages. After Sosa appealed, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld the judgment and also reinstated the case against the government.

Both decisions were appealed to the Supreme Court.

In *Sosa v. Alvarez-Machain*, the ACLU is defending the doctor's right to bring civil claims under ATCA. In *United States v. Alvarez-Machain*, the ACLU is defending his right to bring claims against the U.S. government under the Federal Tort Claims Act for its role in the kidnapping.

"Both cases will likely have an important impact on efforts to use U.S. courts to curb governmental and non-governmental abuses beyond our borders," says Steven R. Shapiro, legal director of the ACLU.

ATCA, which doesn't require either party to reside in the United States, has developed into one of the most promising federal laws in defending international victims of human rights violations. The Act allows non-U.S. citizens to bring civil lawsuits for abuses "committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States."

Since the landmark *Filartiga v. Peña-Irala* case in 1980, when a Paraguayan man successfully sued a Paraguayan police officer for the torture and murder of his son, ATCA has been used to sue foreign individuals in the United States, transnational corporations such as Exxon/Mobil, Unocal and Coca-Cola (see "Unocal off the Hook?" March 15), and now the American government.

ATCA has come under heavy fire recently from U.S. corporations and the Bush administration, the most vocal executive opponent to date, says William Aceves, a professor at California Western School of Law. Aceves is also affiliated with Human Rights

First, which works on behalf of victims of human rights violations in the United States and abroad.

The U.S. Department of Justice, the International Chamber of Commerce, the American Petroleum Institute, the Business Roundtable (an association of CEOs of major U.S. corporations) and the National Foreign Trade Council all submitted briefs encouraging a narrow interpretation of the law. They contend that a broad reading of ATCA would discourage corporations from foreign investment, force courts to rule on U.S. foreign policy and limit the

government's ability to pursue foreign terrorists.

Aceves, who filed a brief on behalf of Alvarez-Machain, says the law is essential in supporting the development of international human rights law. He disputes that ATCA would have a detrimental effect on corporations or the war on terror. No ATCA cases so far, he says, have shown any sign of such side effects. "Unless," he adds, "you consider victims of terror having the right to file lawsuits."

The Supreme Court will review further U.S. action in regard to international law when it hears cases this month challenging the government's denial of due process to U.S. citizens designated as enemy combatants and to foreign nationals indefinitely detained at the military base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. ■

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Rove Sweet Rove

Ignored by "Bush's Brain," activists take the fight to his home. *By Tracy Van Slyke*

ON A QUIET SUNDAY AFTERNOON in late March, more than a dozen yellow school buses crept up the street of a high-end Washington, D.C. neighborhood and parked in front of the home of Karl "Bush's Brain" Rove, senior policy advisor to President Bush.

Members of National People's Action (NPA), a national coalition of community organizations, poured onto Rove's lawn demanding that the White House support the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The activists surrounded Rove's home chanting, blowing whistles and carrying posters with the message, "Rove: Don't steal the dream!"

If passed, the DREAM Act would grant in-state college tuition for children of immigrants who have graduated from high school and who have lived in the country for at least five years. Students also would begin the process toward legal citizenship. An estimated 50,000-65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school in the United States each year but can't work legally or qualify for in-state tuition to attend college. The DREAM Act already has 42 Senate cosponsors but is stalled for a vote on the Senate floor.

NPA invited Rove to meet that weekend for the group's annual conference to discuss the legislation. Rove declined to come

or send representatives. In response, NPA took the meeting to his front door.

For 10 minutes, Rove moved from window to window, yelling to the crowd, "get off my property." From the street, observers could see him through the windows pacing furiously and shouting into a phone.

"We are here today to send a strong message to the Bush administration," NPA Co-Chairwoman Emira Palacios told the crowd. "We are telling them that if they want the Hispanic vote, they must give us the DREAM Act!"


Throughout chants of "Karl, Karl, come on out! See what the Dream Act is all about," police and secret service officers negotiated with Rove to meet with NPA members. As Rove continued to stall, the crowd broke into a rousing rendition of "America the Beautiful."

Upon agreeing to meet with two NPA leaders, he promptly ushered them into his garage and shut the door. NPA Co-Chairwoman Inez Killingsworth said Rove moved in "nose-to-nose," with them, shouting how they had scared his children. The meeting lasted two minutes.

Speaking with the media outside, Palacios said: "He is very offended because we dared to come here. We dared to come here because he dared to ignore us. I'm sorry we disturbed his children, but our children are disturbed everyday." ■



Let them drive SUVs:
Karl Rove looks at
the sea of protesters
outside his home.



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In Sheep's Clothing

Benetton is color blind, except when it comes to its profits. *By Pauline Bartolone*

ITALIAN-OWNED BENETTON GROUP became the largest landowner in Argentina in 1997 when it bought Compania Tierras del Sur Argentina S.A. and took over 2.2 million acres and 280,000 sheep to produce wool for its international clothing line. Despite advertisements promoting racial harmony and diversity, Benetton made enemies with the native Mapuche population—and this dispute has turned into a lawsuit over property.

Atilio Curinanco and his wife Rosa Nahuelquir requested permission in early 2002 to start a family business on a seventeen acre plot called Santa Rosa in front of one of Benetton's properties. Because Benetton's land is well fenced in other areas and Santa Rosa was known among Mapuche to be unoccupied, the family believed the plot was available.

As is customary, the couple contacted the Instituto Autárquico de Colonización

(IAC), a government-managed real estate agency that tracks whether property is available and notifies prospective landowners of its status. After receiving verbal confirmation from IAC that the land was available, the family moved in and began raising animals and crops.

"We went to the land without harming anyone," Curiñanco says.

"We didn't cut a fence. We didn't go at night. We didn't hide ourselves. We waited for someone to come to let us know if it bothered them."

Two months later, Benetton claimed the land, and IAC seized the property and the belongings of the Curinanco-Nahuelquir family. Santa Rosa remains unoccupied today as the family seeks to win legal rights to the land. The case, brought by Benetton for land usurpation, opens April 14.

Across the dusty highway from Santa Rosa, other Mapuche are threatened with eviction. In 1992, Benetton purchased land surrounding Leleque, a village of eight families who worked for the Argentinean railroad company loading wool, leather and other goods for transport. In exchange for the land Mapuche had occupied for 13,000 years, Benetton constructed the Leleque museum to "narrate the history and culture of a mythical land."

A year after Benetton bought the property, however, the railroad station was closed, running water was cut off and police stopped serving the area. A resolution also was passed prohibiting Leleque

In exchange for the Mapuche's land, Benetton built a museum to "narrate the culture of a mythical land."

residents from having animals, and residents were told they had to abandon their houses to make way for a tourist attraction.

The tourist project involves reactivating the railway for guided tours of Patagonia including visits to the Leleque museum, where, according to tourism literature, "one can enjoy a Patagonia *asado* [Argentine barbeque] at the Benetton estate."

"Little by little, they have been closing the door on the Leleque community. It's a very strategic plan," says Mauro Millan of the Mapuche organization 11 de Octubre—named for the last day before Spanish settlers moved to Argentina 500 years ago—that fights for Mapuche sovereignty.

While the Leleque families remain in their homes waiting to be evicted, they seek ways to sustain themselves in the area. "We have decided that there won't be any more evictions, from the state or from Benetton," says Millan.

Benetton, which has 7,000 retail stores in 120 countries, has been involved in controversy before. In addition to progressive advertising campaigns depicting AIDS victims and death row inmates, in the late '90s a textile plant that produced Benetton clothing in Istanbul was found in violation of Turkish and international laws involving the use of child labor. ■

PAULINE BARTOLONE is a journalist and independent radio producer.



The Task at Hand

Will Cheney's secret energy meetings see the light? By Brian H. Kehrl

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has until June 1 to turn over secret documents involving Vice President Dick Cheney's energy task force or provide the legal grounds to withhold them.

U.S. District Judge Paul L. Friedman instructed the departments of the Interior and Defense, as well as several other government agencies, to make public thousands of pages of documents on the day-to-day operations of the classified meetings and records of the task force's executive director, Energy Department employee Andrew Lundquist.

In his March 31 ruling, Friedman rejected arguments by the Bush administration that records from the meetings—including the names of those present—are protected by executive privilege. He found that the documents involve issues of public interest and importance and therefore fall under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The task force, formally known as the National Energy Development Policy Group, was created by President Bush in early 2001 to devise the nation's energy policy. It was chaired by Cheney and consisted of 10 Cabinet-level officials who met with representatives from oil, coal, gas and nuclear industries.

The National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), an environmental advocacy group, and Judicial Watch, a government watchdog organization, jointly filed suit three years ago after the administration refused to turn over a full accounting of documents.

According to the NRDC, the partial set they received already reveal that the task force drew heavily from industry representatives, often using their recommendations word for word.

The groups now contend that the remainder will prove that industry executives unduly influenced energy policy, particularly in relation to oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and the weakening of power plant pollution standards. Judicial Watch also believes the documents will prove that former Enron chairman Kenneth Lay and influential lobbyists-turned-politicians Marc Racicot and Haley Barbour were present.

"The court decision opens up a potential treasure trove of information to the public on the operations of the energy task force," says Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton. "The Bush administration penchant for secrecy has suffered another set back in the courts."

A related case in which Cheney also claims executive privilege will be heard April 27 by the U.S. Supreme Court. Despite the apparent conflict of interest, Cheney's duck-hunting buddy Justice Antonin Scalia has refused to recuse himself from the case.

The administration is under additional scrutiny for its energy bill now before the Senate that provides subsidies to energy industries and could prove ruinous to the Clean Air, Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water acts. ■

4.3 Are There No Workhouses, No Warehouse Clubs?

Wall Street is grinding an ax for Costco Wholesale Corp., an operator of warehouse clubs across the country. Investors and finance analysts complain that the company is not suitably deferential to its shareholders. As a worthy from Deutsche Bank blubbered to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Costco runs its business like it is a private company." That's code in the financial press for a company that pays its 100,000 hourly workers

pretty decent wages and lavishes them with affordable benefits. Full-time stiffs at Costco, the *Journal* reports, can pull down more than \$40,000 after a few years of working. Cashiers enjoy a wage scale as much as 50 percent more generous than Wal-Mart's. Eighty-two percent of Costco employees have company health coverage, as opposed to less than half of Wal-Mart's proles.

Meanwhile, reports the *New York Times*, Wal-Mart is one of several huge retail chains currently being sued for altering employees' time records. The practice is apparently endemic. The *Times* reports the sad peregrinations of Drew Pooters, a retail drone who migrated from a Toys "R" Us store to a Family Dollar to a Rentway in search of honest managers. At each stop, however, he discovered that his time sheet was systematically shaved.

Perhaps it's time for the Pooters of the world to unite.

4.1 And The Brand Played On

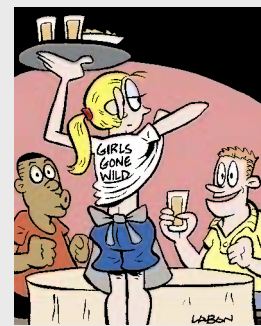
If you ever find yourself arguing about "the culture" with a family-values Republican, keep this phrase handy: Girls Gone Wild Cantina and Dance Club. This franchise venture, due to open its first outlet in Times Square this fall, is a spinoff of the

popular "Girls Gone Wild" video series. The man behind the videos, Joe Francis, has made a \$100 million-a-year company from them, according to the *New York Times*, and he does it the way they teach in business school. He

found an underserved demand (in this case, for amateur T and A, as opposed to professional porn acting), built a brand identity through adept advertising, and fielded an aggressive sales operation. He also recruited a docile workforce (mostly dumb and/or wasted college coeds out on the town) only too happy to work for next to nothing (usually a gimme tank top).

Like many captains of industry, Francis has his share of legal trouble. As the *Times* reports, he faces a full docket of civil and criminal charges, including racketeering, deceptive business practices, obscene acts with minors and rape. Troubling as these circumstances may be, suggests Jennifer Worthington, a partner in the Cantina venture, they in no way besmirch Francis' gift to our culture. "Even if you don't agree with the tapes," she explained to the *Times*, "it's a fun, cool brand."

—Dave Mulcahey



Born in Port-au-Prince to a well-to-do family, Michele Montas' lifelong passion for journalism led her to marry Jean Dominique, one of Haiti's most outspoken journalists and pro-democracy activists. Dominique founded Radio-Haiti-Inter in the '60s, when most media served up government propaganda. The station was the first to broadcast in Creole to a mostly illiterate population.

After Dominique's assassination in 2000 by gunmen allegedly linked to Aristide's Lavalas Party, Montas ran the station until her bodyguard's murder in 2002 and subsequent threats forced her to flee to the United States. Now a U.N. official, Montas recently talked with *In These Times* about Radio Haiti, Haitian men and her homeland.

Radio Haiti was rightfully called the voice of Haiti's people. You've worked in different media since, on both sides of the mike. Have you found anything like it?

Nothing. Radio Haiti was and is still my passion. It was alive! The relationship was so organic that when Jean

The people pushed out Duvalier. Now they're just bystanders.

They are aside, just looking at the whole thing. It's Aristide's thugs against the other thugs. To me, the danger now is that the popular movement that brought Aristide to power is mistaken with the *chimres* out in the street attacking people. There was hope among people that things would change for the Haitian majority. That dream is still there. What people worry about now is a return to the old system where Haitian elites control everything.

Did you hear what Haiti's prime minister's cousin told the *New York Times* recently? "Too many Haitians, particularly men, are convinced things would be better if they were in power."

It's true in a way! (laughing). I'm very worried about the impact of power on most Haitian males. Haiti is officially run by men, but [truly] run by women. The whole country's economic basis rests on women. Haiti has many single-mother families. When men are in all avenues of power, it's often much more about what they can get out of power—how long they stay, how much they have—than sharing, openness, generosity, responsibility.

You've met Aristide. What do you make of his claims that the United States kidnapped him?

It's obvious he was pushed out. It's obvious the so-called rebel army against him had U.S. backing. Aristide was part of the problem, but he could have been part of a smoother solution. It all reminded me of the fall of Baghdad. Here is this rebel army allowed to come in—they go to museums, burn works of art, among them are convicts condemned by Haiti's justice system. And the U.S. isn't there to stop the bloodshed and destruction, which goes on for days before calming down.

Very few questioned the putative cause of the political crisis: the 2000 Haitian legislative elections.

Definitely. It was never that much of a crisis. Embarking international aid over irregularities concerning seven senators was a bad decision. The Haitian people had no help in terms of health and education programs—everything went through NGOs. And NGOs cannot create a policy in any country in the world.

Did you have to hold your tongue while reading Jeb Bush's recent editorial about his brother's honest, democratic Haiti policy?

Oh yes. I read that with the type of smile that Jean Dominique would have had, skeptical but grinning, ear to ear. ■

To read the full-length interview, go to www.inthesetimes.com.

On an Island of Men

By Kevin Y. Kim



Michele Montas

died, I gave his ashes to a peasant farmers' organization in Artibonite. [Haiti's main rice-growing region.] The people helped us stay on the air whenever we lost financial support from advertisements. We functioned like a public station but were privately owned and commercial—a difficult equilibrium. But Jean had quite a philosophy about this. He used to

say as a former agronomist he could live with just one banana in his stomach for a whole day.

In 1986, a popular uprising pushed Jean-Claude Duvalier out of Haiti on a U.S. plane. Today, another uprising, another Haitian leader exiting by way of U.S. transportation. Bad rerun?

The similarities are striking. Aristide's *chimres* militia behaves like the Macoutes, Duvalier's repressive militia. During the 1991-1994 military coup, you had the FRAPH, the military's militia, acting the same way. Power is a trap in Haiti. We saw it when Aristide, the priest who came to power on the wings of a movement built against dictatorships, changed into the politician using the same methods as Duvalier to stay in power.

KEVIN Y. KIM is a writer in New York whose work has appeared in *The Nation*, *L.A. Weekly*, and the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.



It's the Stupidity, Stupid

“WHAT DID THE PRESIDENT KNOW, AND when did he know it?” For an older generation, this Watergate-era question encapsulated how America stopped trusting its leadership. But as President George W. Bush now claims he had no warnings of a terrorist attack before 9/11, our generation is facing a similar crisis of confidence and has a similar question: “What didn’t the president know, and why didn’t he know it?”

The facts are clear: The intelligence community issued 12 separate warnings that terrorists were planning to use airplanes as missiles. The *Wall Street Journal* noted that the warnings were consistent with earlier intelligence showing that al Qaeda planned to “use passenger jets as kamikaze weapons” and consistent with a federal report in 1999 that said, “Suicide bomber(s) belonging to al Qaeda’s Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives ... into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the CIA, or the White House.”

Despite this evidence, the Administration continues to offer the public little except denials that are then proved false. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice claimed in 2002 that no one in the government knew terrorists “would try to use an airplane as a missile.” When confronted with evidence that her statement was untrue, Rice admitted to the 9/11 Commission in January 2004 that she misspoke, but then three months later she made the same claim in a March 22 *Washington Post* op-ed. She also claimed to never have been briefed on such a threat before 9/11 (as if not reading memos should absolve one of responsibility)—but Rice accompanied the president to the 2001 G-8 summit in Genoa, Italy. There, she and the president were warned that Islamic terrorists were plotting to use airliners as missiles in a potential assassination attempt on world leaders attending the summit.

Similarly, Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley claimed “all the chatter [before 9/11] was of an attack, a potential al Qaeda attack, overseas.” Again, this is untrue. According to the bipartisan 9/11 congressional inquiry, in May 2001 the intelligence community reported “that bin Laden supporters were planning to infiltrate the United States” to “carry out a terrorist operation using high explosives.” The panel also reported that during the same month, the Pentagon “acquired and shared with other elements of the Intelligence Community information suggesting that seven individuals associated with bin Laden departed various locations for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.”

The president himself has gone even further in his denials: He has unequivocally stated that he had absolutely no idea of a terrorist threat on airlines before 9/11, claiming “if we’d had known that the enemy was going to fly airplanes into a building, we would have done everything in our power to stop it.” The public plea of ignorance, however, is belied by the August 6, 2001, briefing the president personally received at his Crawford, Texas, mansion in which he was explicitly told Bin Laden’s associates could be planning to hijack airplanes in an attack on America.

In truth, one of two things is happening: Either the president and top officials are lying to the American public about what they knew before 9/11 in order to hide their gross negligence, or they are telling the truth and failed to grasp the importance of the dire warnings they were repeatedly given.

The lying scenario would be fairly typical of an administration that has become the Michelangelo of dishonesty. And, in one sense, it would be slightly more comforting than the “asleep at the wheel” scenario: It is better to have a White House that at least understood terror warnings even if it covers up past negligence in addressing them, rather than one that was intellectually incapable of grasping overt national security threats.

And that is where the Watergate-style questions arise: After receiving all the intelligence warnings, how could the president still not have known about a serious threat? What did he fail to comprehend? Why in 2001 did he insist on taking one of the longest summer vacations in White House history instead of acting on the intelligence he was given? And most importantly, if the administration as a whole failed to understand such explicit warnings in 2001, can it be trusted to grasp them now?

For its part, the Bush campaign wants none of these questions asked. Its ads invoking images of Ground Zero are designed to make it seem as if President Bush took office on 9/12, instead of eight months beforehand, when 9/11 might have been prevented. But there is something a little odd about a president running on his supposed ability to protect America while simultaneously admitting he was asleep at the wheel during the worst national security breakdown in American history. It is as if the president thinks voters are as ignorant of reality as he was ignorant of pre-9/11 intelligence.

But people are not stupid. And until President Bush provides real answers about why our country was so vulnerable on 9/11, it will be impossible to believe he has the capacity to secure America in the future. ■

Bush campaign ads invoking images of Ground Zero are designed to make it seem as if the president took office on 9/12, instead of eight months beforehand, when 9/11 might have been prevented.

DAVID SIROTA is director of strategic communications at the Center for American Progress and a former spokesman for Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.).



Capitol Report *By Craig Aaron*

Bedtime for Bobos

To David Brooks, 'material things are shot through with enchantment.' In other words, you are what you buy.

THE MOST INFURIATING THING ABOUT DAVID Brooks isn't his smug tone or the way he dismisses critics as anti-Semites from "Planet Chomsky." What's truly maddening is that liberals keep lapping up his thinly sourced pop sociology.

Brooks has been embraced as "the conservative guy who can talk to liberals." The former *Weekly Standard* scribe holds down a column at the *New York Times*, and his commentaries regularly appear on PBS and NPR. Brooks may be working off the same set of talking points as the *Wall Street Journal* or Fox News, but he's a kindler, gentler neocon.

Brooks' specialty is divining political and societal trends based on where we shop and eat, whether in his book-length exploration of "Bobos" (short for "bourgeois bohemians") or his recent paean to the nation's sprawling exurban "utopia." To Brooks, "material things are shot through with enchantment." You are what you buy.

Brooks' best-known article is his December 2001 *Atlantic Monthly* cover story on the chasm between "Red" and "Blue" America—the divided nation illustrated on election-night maps showing which states voted for Bush or Gore in 2000. Shuttlng between his home in a "Blue"-blooded Maryland suburb and Franklin County, Pennsylvania—a Red county in a Blue state—Brooks discovered that it's hard to spend \$20 on a meal in Red America, and nobody there thinks Woody Allen is funny.

From this "research," Brooks concludes that the humble, Bush-loving Red states are all country music and Christmas-ornament stores. The snobby Blue states, with Ivy League stickers on their Volvos, prefer performance art and big government. But Brooks found no evidence of a class divide in this country. His proof? Asked whether they believed America is split between haves and have-nots, the Reds said yes, but "as the conversation continued, it became clear that the people saying yes did not consider themselves to be among the have-nots."

Despite its dubious premise, Brooks' article has taken on a life of its own. In April, *Philadelphia Magazine* devoted more than 3,000 words to discrediting the piece. Author Sasha Issenberg retraced Brooks' footsteps in Franklin County, proving that one can spend more than \$20 at Red Lobster and even rent *Annie Hall*. But Issenberg doesn't dispute the flimsy notion of the Two Americas itself. He even favorably quotes conservative analyst Michael Barone's description of a divided nation: "One is observant, tradition-minded, moralistic. The other is unobservant, liberation-minded, relativistic."

Unfortunately, Issenberg is not alone. Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg—a standard-bearer for the "populist" wing of the party—wrote a book titled *The Two Americas*, in which he sees a nation "ever more polarized on cultural issues." Like Brooks, Greenberg puts a lot of weight on consumer purchases and preferences. Greenberg divvies up the electorate into narrow categories with cute nicknames. In the "Tampa Blue" region, voters fly the flag, eat at Hooters and enjoy "Friends." In "Heartland Iowa," he finds mainline Protestants and ESPN enthusiasts but no "West Wing" fans. Over at "Eastside Tech," voters drive foreign cars, drink frappuccinos and visit eBay. This type of analysis, as critic Chris Lehmann writes, suggests "our political system is not in the throes of acute demographic or ideological polarization so much as a state of imaginative bankruptcy."

The Two Americas debate ignores the half of the country that didn't vote. And rather than fretting that Ralph Nader is "stealing" votes, Greenberg's party might consider why so few people are willing to identify themselves as Democrats. That's a disturbing trend—especially given much of Greenberg's data suggest that swaths of the country support issues once defined as Democratic, such as health care, education, the squeezing of the middle class and growing income inequality. Among the traditionally strong Republican issues, only "the breakdown of the American family" and "rogue nations armed with weapons of mass destruction" are deemed major problems by a majority of voters. Less than a fifth of voters found "outdated government regulations" and "high taxes" to be "extremely serious."

Yet year after year, the have-nots in Red America vote for a party that acts against their interests. It's not simply a matter of culture, as Thomas Frank explains in the April issue of *Harper's*. "Cultural anger is marshaled to achieve economic ends," he writes. "The leaders of the backlash may talk Christ, but they walk corporate."

The Republicans need PR flacks like Brooks to distract voters from their record. Consider Red America's gains from the culture war, as described by Frank:

Vote to stop abortion; receive a rollback in capital-gains taxes. Vote to make the country strong again; receive deindustrialization. Vote to screw those politically correct college professors; receive electricity deregulation. ... Vote to strike a blow against elitism; receive a social order in which wealth is more concentrated than ever before in our lifetimes.

Now if we could only fit that on a bumper sticker. ■

CRAIG AARON
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at *In These Times*
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tive reporter for
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Congress Watch.



The Blame Game

H EIGHTENED PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE WORKINGS of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, better known as the 9/11 Commission, is a welcome expression of public engagement.

But the scope of that interest has been severely constricted by the Commission's limited focus on a partisan blame game. For two days of Commission hearings in late March, the public heard a parade of experts, staff aides and ex-officials talk about the failures of intelligence and policymaking that allowed the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The highlight of the hearing was the dramatic testimony of former counterterrorism director Richard Clarke, who charged that the Bush administration failed to prevent the attacks. Clarke's testimony and recently published book, *Against All Enemies*, make a compelling case that the Bush administration downplayed al Qaeda-related intelligence compiled during the Clinton administration to push its own policy priorities and argues that the Bushites' dismissive attitude allowed terrorists to penetrate the nation's defenses. Clarke's truth-telling has endeared him to many progressives, but this career bureaucrat, who served in counterintelligence posts under four presidents, also is a symptom of the problem and is only of provisional value to the left.

The stunted context that frames Clarke as a progressive is what limits the scope of the 9/11 probe. If blame were to be justly apportioned, it would have to extend into the distant past of American foreign policy formation.

Some Islamist radicals have declared war, or *jihad*, against the United States because past actions have convinced them that we are fighting against Islam. They have chosen asymmetrical warfare as their military method, what we call terrorism.

Faith-based suicide killing is an affront to civilization in its savage disregard for human innocence. But, in fact, it is not much different than indiscriminate death caused by impersonal Daisy Cutter bombs or Tomahawk missiles. We've killed many more innocent civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq in our war on terrorism than the terrorists did on 9/11.

Where are the roots of their *jihad*? And does the United States bear any responsibility for nourishing those roots? To be truly effective in lessening the possibilities of future terrorism, the 9/11 Commission should seek answers to those questions as well.

But to do that we would have to expand the Commission's mandate to look at how the United

States advocated and funded Islamist opposition to the "godless Communists" in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan in the '80s and to the Serbs in Yugoslavia a decade later. These groups evolved into both the Taliban and al Qaeda.

We would even have to look back to 1953, when the United States overthrew Iranian leader Mohammed Mossadegh and inserted Mohammed Reza Pahlavi as Shah. The Shah's repressive regime fertilized the field for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in 1979, the first national triumph of Islamist doctrine.

The West, particularly Britain, has had its colonial hands in the Middle East for centuries, and in the 20th Century the United States got its chance. We've joined the fray in a bipartisan frenzy, intervening, either militarily or through covert action, in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Libya and Iran—and that's just a partial list. (See William Blum's *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*.)

We've vetoed virtually every U.N. resolution condemning Israel for its barbarous treatment of indigenous Palestinians, and yet the United States subsidizes Israel in its expansionist policies and generously provides weapons systems that facilitate continued abuse of the Palestinian people.

What's more, the United States provides protection and aid for oil-rich regimes that stifle all attempts at democratic expression, even as our rhetoric drips with pieties of democracy. Much of that U.S. history helped fuel the cause of the 9/11 terrorists.

"Bring it on," we might say in response. If they are wishing for a martyr's death, we will fulfill it. But that's just macho talk. A hot conflict between America and radical elements of the world's 2 billion Muslims would mean an end to global stability. Peaceful coexistence is the only option.

Thus, we at least should examine the source of their grievances—many of which derive from the sordid history of colonialism. Most anti-colonial forces in the West sympathize with those grievances, and today Europe is taking steps to amend for its colonial past.

But the United States is in denial. The refusal to own up to its dreadful history makes the world less secure and is one source of the growing tension between the United States and "old Europe."

If the 9/11 Commission is seriously seeking to prevent future terrorism, it should focus on ending that deadly denial. Partisan blame games are just diversions. ■

The stunted context that frames Clarke as a progressive is what limits the scope of the 9/11 probe. If blame were to be justly apportioned, it would have to extend into the distant past of American foreign policy formation.

SALIM MUWAKKIL is a senior editor at *In These Times*, a contributing columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* and a *Crime and Communities Media Fellow* of the *Open Society Institute*.



The First Stone *By Joel Bleifuss*

Sleeping Thomas

A FRIEND, WHO RECENTLY argued a civil rights case before the U.S. Supreme Court, told me the following story:

After the first couple of minutes of my argument, I looked over in the direction of Justice Clarence Thomas. He was sleeping. At first I thought he was just sitting with his eyes closed, but then I actually saw him jerking and twitching like people do when they are asleep. I would have been more shocked, except that in preparation I had gone and watched some arguments and I had seen him sleeping in every one of them. But somehow I thought that maybe for mine he would stay awake. What would disturb

me most is if he were to write an opinion that strikes down my case, knowing that he slept through my argument and didn't even have the courtesy to ask a question to clarify an issue.

It is almost like a joke in the legal community, anytime anybody talks about an argument in the Supreme Court the question might come up about whether Clarence was awake or not. I heard that during arguments in a sexual harassment case he laid there with his feet up, face to the ceiling with his eyes closed and chewing gum—until he fell asleep.

We can give Thomas a pass on this one, given that he's already an expert on sexual harassment.

Other lawyers who have argued cases before the Supreme Court told me that they noticed Thomas closes his eyes but were not sure whether he was sleeping.

Veteran court watchers suffer the same doubt. "It is kind of tricky to tell if someone closes their eyes if they are asleep," said Linda Greenhouse, who covers the court for the *New York Times*.

What is certain is that Thomas is famous for not asking questions during oral arguments, which makes one wonder how much he takes in—eyes wide open or shut.

Condoliesza testilies

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, in her effort to counter the charges of gross White House ineptitude leveled by former counterterrorism chief Richard Clarke, made 23 factually inaccurate statements when she appeared in public before the 9/11 Commission. A detailed chronicle of her prevaricating under oath was prepared by David Sirota of the Center for American Progress

(www.americanprogress.org.) (See "It's the Stupidity, Stupid" on page 15.) Here are seven examples:

WHAT RICE SAID "There really was nothing that looked like it was going to happen inside the United States. ... There was nothing demonstrating or showing that something was coming in the United States."

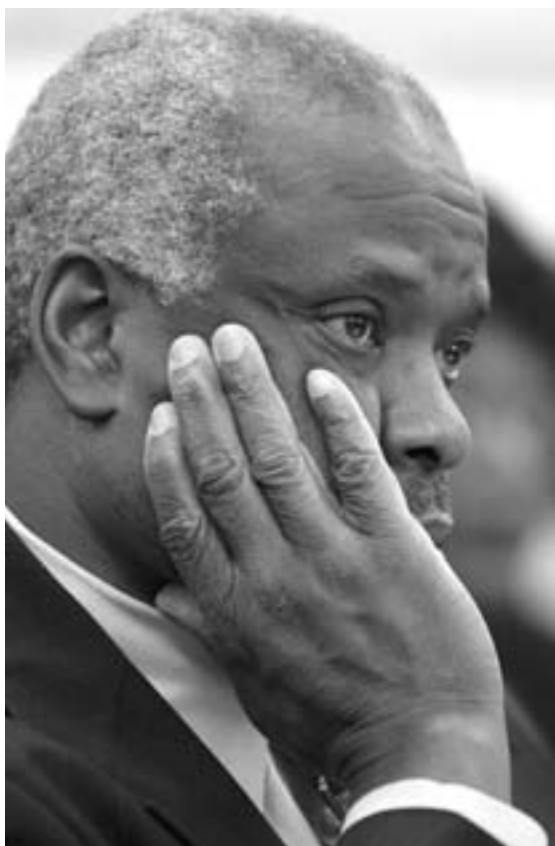
WHAT THEY DID The Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11 noted, "In May 2001, the intelligence community obtained a report that Bin Laden supporters were planning to infiltrate the United States" to "carry out a terrorist operation using high explosives." The report "was included in an intelligence report for senior government officials in August [2001]." That same month, the Pentagon "acquired and shared with other elements of the Intelligence Community information suggesting that seven persons associated with bin Laden had departed various locations for Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States."

WHAT RICE SAID "We increased funding for counterterrorism activities across several agencies."

WHAT THEY DID Upon taking office, the 2002 Bush budget proposed to slash more than a half-billion dollars from counterterrorism funding at the Justice Department.

WHAT RICE SAID "When threat reporting increased during the spring and summer of 2001, we moved the U.S. government at all levels to a high state of alert and activity."

WHAT THEY DID Gen. Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff until October 1, 2001, said that during the summer of 2001, terrorism had moved "farther to the back burner" and he



recounted how the Bush administration's top two Pentagon appointees, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz, "shut down" a plan to weaken the Taliban. Similarly, Gen. Don Kerrick, who served in the Bush White House, sent a memo to the administration saying, "We are going to be struck again" by al Qaeda, but he never heard back from anyone (*Los Angeles Times*, March 30).

WHAT RICE SAID There was "nothing about the threat of attack in the U.S." in the Presidential Daily Briefing the President received on August 6, 2001.

WHAT THEY DID The Presidential Daily Briefing that Bush received was titled, "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States," as Rice testified.

WHAT RICE SAID "If we had known an attack was coming against the United States ... we would have moved heaven and earth to stop it."

WHAT THEY DID Administration intelligence agencies told Rice "an attack was coming," she testified, adding, "Let me read you some of the actual chatter that was picked up in that spring and summer: 'Unbelievable news coming in weeks,' said one. 'Big event—there will be a very, very, very, very big uproar.' 'There will be attacks in the near future.'"

WHAT RICE SAID "The vice president was, a little later in, I think, in May, tasked by the president to put together a group to look at all of the recommendations that had been made about domestic preparedness and all of the questions associated with that."

WHAT THEY DID The vice president's task force never once convened a meeting. In the same time period, the vice president convened at least 10 meetings of his energy task force, and six meetings with Enron executives (*Washington Post*, January 20, 2002, and an August 2003 General Accounting Office Report).

WHAT RICE SAID "There was a discussion of Iraq. I think it was

raised by Don Rumsfeld. It was pressed a bit by Paul Wolfowitz."

WHAT THEY DID Rice contradicted her previous statement that "Iraq was to the side" immediately after 9/11. Indeed, six days after 9/11, Bush signed "a two-and-a-half-page document marked 'Top Secret'" that "directed the Pentagon to begin planning military options for an invasion of Iraq" (*Washington Post*, January 12).

Nader on the radar

Ralph Nader's presidential campaign has been dogged with image problems.

First comes the news that about 10 percent of the supporters of Nader who gave \$250 or more to his campaign also are big funders of the Republican Party. Not exactly news. Nader received significant contributions from die-hard Republicans in 2000.

Next is Nader's flirtation with Lenora Fulani, who twice ran for president as the New Alliance Party candidate. He spoke at "Choosing an Independent President 2004 Campaign," convened in New Hampshire by her organization, the Committee for a Unified Independent Party. Fulani is a follower of psychologist Fred Newman, a cult leader who founded what is known as the "social therapy movement." Nader is cozying up to Fulani, who has endorsed his candidacy, because she heads a national organization with experience gaining third-party ballot status. Chip Berlet, of Political Research Associates, a Boston-based group that studies antidemocratic groups, says that control of this apparatus allowed Fulani and Newman to become major players in the Reform Party in 2000 when Pat Buchanan headed the ticket.

According to Berlet, the Nader-Fulani-Buchanan axis is not that unusual:

Nader has had an ongoing relationship with Buchanan for many years. What you have here is the left-right coalition to smash the corrupt regime that is built around right-wing populist rhetoric—a strategy that was devastat-

ingly bad when it was adopted by some socialists in Germany in the '20s. You would hope that real progressives would make this mistake only once.

Now, Nader failed to collect 1,000 signatures at an Oregon rally that would have put him on the ballot immediately. Only 741 people showed up. So he and his supporters have decided to take a longer route, collecting 15,000 signatures over a three-month period rather than 1,000 in a single gathering.

Not to say that things aren't going well for the campaign. Polls show that Nader is supported by 3 to 7 percent of voters, more than enough to act the spoiler.

Not so, says Nader spokesman Kevin Zeese. "Nader will be taking votes from both parties," he told the Moonie-owned *Washington Times*. "The Reform Party supported Bush in 2000 and they had been urging Ralph to run before he announced." In other words, the Reform Party is still supporting Bush.



Reality day dream

What happens when Richard Clarke and Paul O'Neill face George Bush in the board room? Find out at www.actnowproductions.com/fired, where you will view a cartoon ad that features Bush as Donald Trump with Dick Cheney and Karl Rove as his corporate henchmen. The creators of this ad, Act Now Productions and California Majority PAC, hope to raise enough money to run the ad on "The Apprentice" in key media markets. ■

Downsizing the CEO

Labor and shareholders unite to roll back executive power

BY DAVID MOBERG

THE OMNIPOTENT CORPORATE CHIEF EXECUTIVE EMERGED in the '90s as a popular economic superhero, rivaling the high-tech nerd as creator of the economic boom. But that came to a crashing finale with misdeeds at Enron and dozens of other high-profile businesses—when a mix of executive greed, law-breaking and deregulation built up then burst the stock market bubble.

In the angry aftermath, the labor movement worked closely with public employee pension funds to create a new model of accountability for corporate executives, and this spring the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is expected to issue new rules that will make it easier for shareholders to nominate directors.

"This is the most important corporate governance reform to correct past abuses that we've seen in recent years," says Brandon Rees, a researcher at the AFL-CIO's Center for Working Capital. It reflects a tentative alliance between organized labor and shareholders against arrogant executives and their destructive corporate decision-making.

Shareholders own corporations, but in the first decades of the 20th Century control shifted to professional managers. Although technically accountable to boards of directors representing shareholders, CEOs and corporate insiders now effectively name the directors, who set executive pay, oversee audits and approve broad strategies. With CEOs in near-total control, executive pay skyrocketed regardless of how well corporations performed or planned for the long term.

During the '90s, unions increasingly used the power of their members' pension funds—valued at \$6 trillion—to combat the mismanagement that threatened the retirement wealth of their membership.

Last year unions introduced half of the record number of shareholder resolutions on corporate governance—finding support from many institutional investors that own most stock, such as public pension funds. In 2002 the nation's public employee funds, which hold about 13 percent of all stock, lost \$300 billion. New York figured its state fund lost \$9 billion from 2001 to 2003 as a result of corporate corruption. The crash—and the need to increase contributions to the funds—squeezed state governments, which then laid off workers.

"It was a direct financial attack because of corporate malfeasance," says Richard Ferlauto, director of pension investment policy for AFSCME, which represents public workers. "It caused our members to be fired and to have lower retirement benefits."

These public pension funds, as AFL-CIO associate general counsel Damon Silvers notes, often own shares across the stock mar-

ket, making it hard to walk away from badly managed big companies. Although some pension funds supported corporate raiders to dislodge ineffective managers, broad-based long-term investors lose more than they gain from takeovers. Even though activist labor and public pension investors increasingly won majority votes

on their resolutions in recent years, managers refused to implement the proposals. For shareholders not trying to take control of a company, it is prohibitively expensive to nominate directors to challenge the slate proposed by managers, who use corporate funds to distribute proxy statements.

President Gerald McEntee increased AFSCME's efforts to get more worker representation on public pension boards and to persuade boards to be active shareholders to prevent future abuses. The labor movement attacked exorbitant corporate pay schemes and won an SEC rule forcing mutual funds, historically rubber stamps for executives who were customers for their financial products, to disclose how they voted. Unions also supported legislative reforms but none, including The Sarbanes-Oxley Act that tightened regulation of financial reporting, increased shareholder power.

"We had to design a strategy that would give shareholders real power in the boardroom," Ferlauto says. AFSCME's internal pension plan filed proposals at six corporations in 2003 to permit (continued on page 44)

Incredible Credibility

Richard Clarke's decision to step out publicly and write *Against All Enemies* is more shocking than the revelations within

BY JASON VEST

MEN LIKE RICHARD CLARKE DO NOT, AS A rule, write books. Mandarins of the national security establishment who long ago embedded themselves in the bureaucracy, the closest they ever come to anything like public authorship is via the pens of others. They frequently speak to journalists, sometimes on the record as adjuncts of the political master *du jour*; other times, only on background, perhaps in the service of what they see as sounder policy than the White House does. They consider their import to be their possession of more focused experience and better institutional memory than the strictly politicals they work for; yet by and large they are committed to working within the system, and even in anger rarely consider transgressing the informal boundary that lies just beyond the utterance of an undermining anonymous quote to a major daily newspaper.

For any of these bureaucrats to step in erudite anger from the wings to center stage, then, is rare. For one to do it by name—and in no less than book form—is exceptional. That the author in this case would be Richard Clarke is all the more compelling. I doubt there is a diplomatic or national security reporter who hasn't occasionally talked with Clarke over the past two decades; even at his most forceful on-the-record or cryptic deep background, I can't think of a time when Clarke said anything that would have seriously jeopardized his national security chamberlain's privileges. Nor can I think of a politico/bureaucratic scrap in which Clarke hasn't at least held his own (or even relished, as only a street-fighting kid from Dorchester, Massachusetts, can). For a man like Clarke, then, the threshold for publicly turning on any president—by writing a detailed critical indictment of him and his administration—is naturally very, very high.

This is part of what makes Clarke's *Against All En-*

emies—and his blunt statements to the 9/11 Commission and the press—so satisfying. Thus far, he's forced the White House to send Condoleezza Rice before the Commission, and has sent some partisan Republicans into such a tizzy they're demanding the declassification of previous closed-door Clarke testimony, hoping to find “discrepancies” between Clarke's current public

and previous classified comments. Yet Clarke's broadside hasn't prompted righteous rioting in the streets. So far—if polls are to be believed—he's nudged both the pro- and anti-Bush numbers up a tad but produced no shift in the current myopic yin and yang that is the American polity.

I can't say I find this surprising. As H.L. Mencken once noted—in an epigram that perhaps sums up the gap between Americans' perceptions of the intelligence community and the realities for the best of those who work in it—“the public demands certainties ... but there are no certainties.” For those who want to believe the worst about the Bush administration, Clarke's nuanced criticisms of the

Clinton administration—and his own sleights of hand about mistakes that seem clear in hindsight—are to be ignored. For those deluded in their goal of realizing an easy “region transformed” by exploiting post-9/11 cognitive dissonance—or trying to defend a disengaged pre-9/11 president who easily acceded to a poorly considered endeavor in Mesopotamia—Clarke's renderings are nothing more than the revisionist self-justifications of a civil servant who dropped the ball. For partisans of one side, any inconsistency or error is proof positive of the self-serving or crypto-liberal; for the other, he's a folk hero, his role in dubious international activities, like undermining Boutros-Ghali and bombing the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant, unacknowledged. In essence, he's either a demon by commission or a saint

(continued on page 45)





INTO THE

BY NAOMI KLEIN • BAGHDAD

I HEARD THE SOUND OF FREEDOM in Baghdad's Firdos Square, the famous plaza where the statue of Saddam Hussein was toppled one year ago. It sounds like machine gun fire.

On April 4, Iraqi soldiers, trained and controlled by Coalition forces, opened fire on demonstrators here, forcing the emergency evacuation of the nearby Sheraton and Palestine hotels. As demonstrators returned to their homes in the poor neighborhood of Sadr City, the U.S. army followed with tanks, helicopters and planes, firing at random on homes, stores, streets, even ambulances. According to local hospitals, 47 people were killed and many more injured. In Najaf, the day also was bloody: 20 demonstrators dead, more than 150 injured.

In Sadr City, funeral marches passed by U.S. military tanks and the hospitals were

overflowing with the injured: Ali Hussein, a 16-year-old with a bullet in his spine fired from a helicopter; Gailan Ibrahim, a 29-year-old who was shot in the back by a U.S. plane; Ali Faris, a 14-year-old whose bladder was removed after a U.S. bullet sliced through the door of his family home. "The same thing happened to two other children in the neighborhood," his grandfather told me.

Outside, kids danced on a burned out American Humvee and shouted the lesson that they had learned the night before: "George Bush is Saddam Hussein. George Bush is terrorist!" By afternoon, clashes had resumed.

Make no mistake: this is not the "civil war" that Washington has been predicting will break out among Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. Rather, it is a war provoked by the U.S. occupation authority and waged by its forces against the growing number of Shi-

ites who support Moqtada al-Sadr.

Al-Sadr is the younger, more radical rival of the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, portrayed by his adoring supporters as a kind of cross between Ayatollah Khomeini and Che Guevara. He blames the United States for attacks on civilians, compares U.S. occupation chief Paul Bremer to Saddam Hussein, aligns himself with Hamas and Hezbollah, and has called for a *jihad* against the controversial interim constitution. His Iraq might look a lot like Iran.

And it's a message with a market. With al-Sistani concentrating on lobbying the United Nations rather than on confronting the U.S.-led occupation in the streets, many Shiites are growing restless and are turning to the more militant tactics preached by al-Sadr. Some have joined the Mahadi, Moqtada's black-clad army that claims hundreds of thousands of members.

At first, Bremer responded to al-Sadr's



growing strength by ignoring him; now he is attempting to provoke him into all-out battle. The trouble began when Bremer closed down al-Sadr's newspaper last week, sparking a wave of peaceful demonstrations. On Saturday, Bremer further raised the stakes by sending coalition forces to surround al-Sadr's house near Najaf and arrest his communications officer.

Predictably, the arrest sparked immediate demonstrations in Baghdad, which the Iraqi army responded to by opening fire and allegedly killing three people. It was these deaths that provoked the bloody demonstrations.

At the end of the day, al-Sadr issued a statement calling on his supporters to stop staging demonstrations "because your enemy prefers terrorism and detests that way of expressing opinion" and instead urged them to employ unnamed "other ways" to resist the occupation, a statement many

have interpreted as a call to arms.

On the surface, this chain of events is mystifying. With the so-called Sunni triangle in flames after the gruesome Faluja attacks, why is Bremer pushing the comparatively calm Shiite south into battle?

Here's one possible answer: Washington has given up on its plans to hand over power to an interim Iraqi government on June 30, and it is now creating the chaos it needs to declare the handover impossible. A continued occupation will be bad news for George Bush on the campaign trail, but not as bad as if the handover happens and the country erupts, an increasingly likely scenario given the widespread rejection of the legitimacy of the interim constitution and the U.S.-appointed Governing Council.

It's a plan that might make sense at meetings in Washington, but here in Baghdad it looks like pure madness. By sending the new Iraqi army to fire on the people they

are supposed to be protecting, Bremer has destroyed what slim hope they had of gaining credibility with an already highly mistrustful population. Before storming unarmed demonstrators, the soldiers could be seen pulling on ski masks, so they wouldn't be recognized in their neighborhoods later.

And the Coalition Provisional Authority, which has just hired a London advertising firm to persuade Iraqis that it is committed to democracy, is increasingly being compared on the streets to Saddam Hussein, who also didn't much like peaceful demonstrations or critical newspapers.

In an interview on April 5, Iraq's Minister of Communication, Haider Al-Abadi, blasted the act that started the current wave of violence: the closing of al-Sadr's newspaper, *Al-Hawzah*. "It was completely wrong," he said. "Is this how we are going to run the country in the future, sending soldiers to shut down newspapers?"

Al-Abadi, who is supposedly in charge of media in Iraq, says he was not even informed of the plan to close *Al-Hawza* until the locks were on the door, adding that Sadr's newspaper did nothing more than speculate that the United States is behind some of the terrorist attacks here. "But these are rumors in the whole country, I'm hearing them everywhere."

Meanwhile, the man at the center of it all—Moqtada al-Sadr is having his hero status amplified by the hour.

All of these explosive forces came together when thousands of demonstrators filled Firdos Square. On one side of the plaza, a couple of kids climbed to the top of a building and took a knife to a billboard advertising Iraq's new army. On the other side, U.S. forces pointed tanks at the crowd while a loudspeaker told them that "demonstrations are an important part of democracy but blocking traffic will not be permitted."

At the front of the square was the new statue that the Americans put in place of the toppled one of Saddam Hussein. The faceless figures of the new statue are supposed to represent the liberation of the Iraqi people. Today they are plastered with photographs of Moqtada al-Sadr. ■

NAOMI KLEIN is the author of *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, which has been translated into 27 languages, and *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalization Debate*. She has just completed *The Take*, a documentary film on worker responses to Argentina's economic crisis.





A Crucial Coalition

*Women, progressives
must march for rights*

BY ELEANOR SMEAL

IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT SHOWS the power of progressive coalitions, it is the March for Women's Lives. The progressive feminist movement will converge April 25 on Washington, D.C., for what will be a historic march for women's reproductive rights and health. The March for Women's Lives is co-sponsored by more than 1,200 groups, including women's, civil rights, environmental, lesbian and gay rights, women of color, disability, labor, religious, civil liberties, peace organizations and more. This march represents a huge coalition of pro-women's rights progressive forces coming together to say, "We won't go back."

The threat of returning to the days of illegal, unsafe, back-alley abortions is very real. The recently released private papers of the late Justice Harry Blackmun reveal that in 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court's historic vote in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* was 5-4 to reverse *Roe v. Wade* and the right to privacy. Only because of Blackmun's last-minute pressure and that of Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and David Souter did Justice Anthony Kennedy switch his vote and rescue a heavily burdened *Roe*. Kennedy, who was counsel for the Archdiocese of Sacramento before being appointed to the Court, initially voted with Justices Rehnquist, Scalia, Thomas and White.

The Supreme Court's razor thin 5-4 split is not only on *Roe v. Wade*. Affirmative action, environmental questions, and even the presidency itself in *Bush v. Gore* were decided by the same margin.

If *Roe* is reversed, our fundamental right to privacy—upon which the Court's decision was based—is in jeopardy. And two other landmark cases—*Griswold v. Connecticut* and *Eisenstadt v. Baird* that made birth control pills accessible through the right to privacy—also would be at stake.

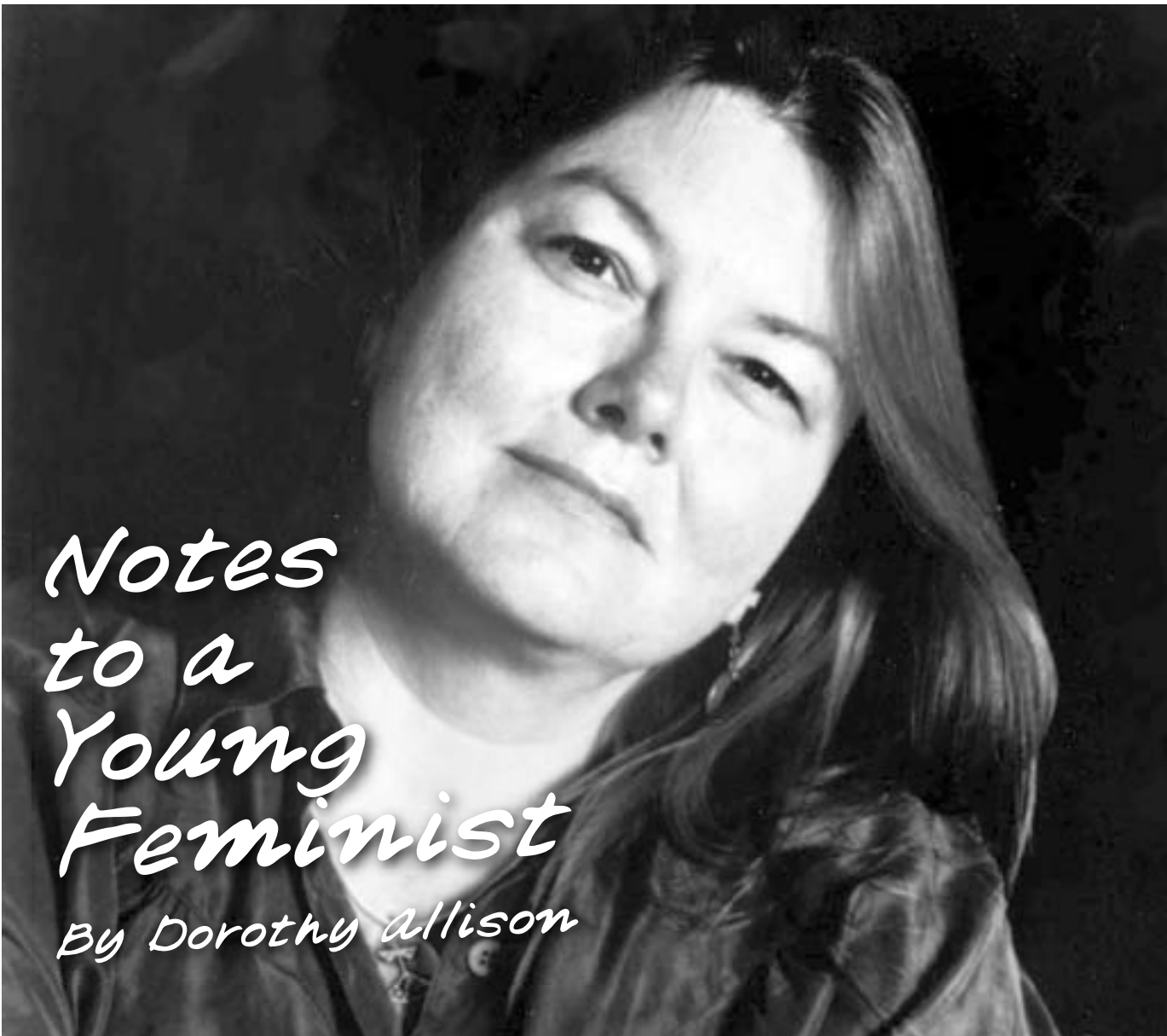
The most recent Court decision on abortion, *Stenberg v. Carhart*, was decided in June 2000 by a 5-4 majority in favor of abortion rights. That means the appointment of even one more anti-choice justice likely would result in further limiting or even overturning *Roe v. Wade*. States across the nation continue to pass harsh laws—more than 400 since 1995—imposing restrictions on women's access to safe and legal abortions and contraception. These laws especially affect young women and poor women.

While far too many politicians and justices attempt to eliminate a woman's right to choose a safe, legal abortion and family planning, public support for legal abortion has remained steady and high over the years. A 2003 *Ms.* magazine poll conducted by the Peter Harris Research Group found that 73 percent of women and men favor a woman's right to an abortion with the advice of her doctor. This is almost exactly the same level Harris found in 1995.

Yet Americans are unaware—and indeed do not believe—that this right can be lost. These fundamental rights are threatened not only by the Supreme Court but in the federal circuit courts of appeals and district courts, as well.

Just as the progressive movement has joined together for the (continued on page 35)





Notes to a Young Feminist

By Dorothy Allison

a FEW YEARS AGO THERE WAS A CONFERENCE in Minneapolis on “Feminism and Rhetoric.” I went as a doctrinaire, whiny feminist. The focus of my rant was directed at younger feminist theorists who were using an arcane language that I found an obstruction to my understanding. I thought not only was it arcane, it was an act of cowardice because they were talking in such high falutin’ language no one knew what the fuck they were saying!

So I did my rant about how, if you people don’t clean it up, we’re lost—you can’t keep talking in this language that none of us understands. I just laid into them. Then, feminist theorist Judith Butler gave her talk, and she changed how she spoke—it was as if she were doing a consecutive translation. For every one of those marvelous words she used, she provided an alternative that

I actually understood! I did have to, like, listen really close, but I got it, and I followed along! Afterward, half-a-dozen young philosophy students went up to her and, being incredibly nasty and critical, tore her apart for the way she had delivered the talk.

Since then, I have made a study of language. I can actually understand what they’re talking about when they say “normative.” It’s true that sometimes I have to make notes and go look up shit. It’s also true that I have to drink a lot of coffee and Diet Coke. And I have to, like, focus. If you let your attention wander for an instant, you’re into an entirely different philosophical category!

The specificity of the language is sometimes necessary because quite often the subjects being discussed are notoriously complicated, frighteningly dangerous and self-revelatory. Let me assure you that when our feminist scholars, philosophers, speculators and think-

ers use this language they're not always talking about a distanced subject but about their specific lives. The sex act they may in fact have committed, enjoyed, desired or refused. They are standing naked, and the only thing holding them up, in some cases, is that complicated language.

What I don't hear at conferences is what did in fact bring me to feminism. So let's go back, let's begin: *Rubyfruit Jungle*, *Riverfinger Women*, *Meridian*, *Wise Blood*, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, *True Story of a Drunken Mother*, *Snapshots of a Daughter-in-law*, *The Girl*, *The Salt Eaters*, *A Woman Is Talking to Death*, *Edward the Dyke*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*, *The Bell Jar*, *Big Blonde* and authors like Judy Grahn, Elana Dykewomon, Alice Walker, Adrienne Rich, Carson McCullers, Audre Lorde, Lillian Hellman and Joann Ross.

What was the first feminist book you read? Not *Our Bodies, Ourselves* or *The Feminist Mystique*. No, take me back. All the way back. Take me back to the trashy books you read. Take me back to the stuff that you read and that you wanted to be. I'm 54 years old. To quote "Sex and the City," I'm abso-fuckin'-lutely tired. I read theory. I read to train my language and to sharpen my mind. But I write fiction. I write fiction for a specific, deliberate, reasonable, old lesbian purpose. The world I love is not on the page. The world I understand is not reflected on the page. What made me a feminist were occasional glimpses of my real life on the page.

We can talk a lot about mother-daughter transgression and generational resentment for a good couple a million decades, but I came to feminism as a lover. Feminism for me was a love affair. I came to feminism as an escaped Baptist. Feminism for me was a religious conversion experience. I came to feminism as a hurt, desperate, denied child, and I would've killed for the feminist mama who would take me in her arms and make it all make sense. And I've been running after her ass ever since.

I do not necessarily believe that someone can make it all make sense. I am, in fact, in love with the feminist ideal of "get used to being uncomfortable, you'll learn something." That is what I need, want, ache for, and I believe absolutely in the future of feminism.

I do not construct feminism as an ethical or moralistic system. When I talk about justice, I am talking about institutions that have ground me and my kind, right down to rock so far back that they owe me. They owe me as a working-class girl. They owe me as a queer girl. They owe me as a raped child. They owe me as a writer who had to raise money and who couldn't write for years because she had to raise money. Yet, I also know that that voice saying "They owe me" is the most dangerous bone in my body. It is a part of me that I have to resist. It is a bone I cannot stand on, feel or shape. Instead, I owe you, my feminist sisters.

"DO YOU HAVE A UTOPIAN VISION OF THE FUTURE?" YOU ask me. I got a fucking utopian vision of the present! I live in Sonoma County. It's true; I live in the low-rent district of Sonoma County and, it's true, west of Napa. You know what they do with the poor people in San Francisco? They give them a bus ticket to my town. We have more social services than anything else. I live in Guerneville, a small town in northern California where people say a third of the population is queer. And more than a third of the population is dying. Not of AIDS, no, AIDS has actually gotten a little smaller in our town. What's killing us is cancer and drug addiction. And

methamphetamine labs blowing up, because contrary to rumor, the return of cash to the capitalist system of America ain't happening in Sonoma County. Now methamphetamines—that's immediate cash. And people are dying because they're brewing it in the back of their trailer parks. My town, between tie-dyed T-shirts and methamphetamines, it'll keep going. And I confess, I buy as many tie-dyed T-shirts as I can stand. And I hold writing

"Do you have a utopian vision of the future?" you ask me. I got a fucking utopian vision of the present!

workshops for working-class kids. I like it that way. They've got to write short essays about why they identify themselves as working class. I still haven't gotten over the child who described herself as working class because she doesn't have access to her inheritance until she's 30—but I took her in!

ALL MY FRIENDS DOWN IN SAN FRANCISCO KEEP calling me and saying, "Get your ass down here and get married!" I put a message on my phone machine. "I've pierced her tit; I have tattooed her left thigh. I'll be god damned if I'm gonna marry her ass!" I became a feminist because I wanted answers that were not easy moralisms. I became a feminist because I had (continued on page 43)

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Confronting the Mommy Myth

BY SUSAN J. DOUGLAS

AS I WRITE THIS, MUCH OF THE COUNTRY is focused on the 9/11 hearings and revelations about Team Bush's destructive obsession with Saddam Hussein. We also are witnessing the fruits of that obsession as Iraq spirals down into a firestorm, rent by fervid anti-American hatred. These issues—that Team Bush misled the country about weapons of mass destruction, that Team Bush was so fixated on avenging Bush the First, that Team Bush has fostered increased terrorism by invading Iraq—coupled with this administration's disastrous economic and environmental policies, will, and should, dominate the presidential campaign.

But Team Bush also has been conducting another war, here and abroad, a war against women. Currently they are seeking to invade, with considerable success, the private medical records of women who have had abortions so that the administration can defend its new law against late-term abortions. (And please, let's all stop saying "partial birth," an inaccurate, propagandistic term.) They want welfare mothers to work longer hours than they already do in workfare programs. They tried to undermine Title IX and Head Start.

In addition to women in general, there is a huge constituency out there, mothers and children, who have been taken for granted, pandered to or ignored since Reagan. Caught between speed-up

at work and the decline of leisure time on the one hand, and the myth of "the perfect mom" on the other, mothers are urged to do more and more with virtually no support from the government or workplace. It is harder to be a mother in the United States than in any other industrialized country.

So the Democrats will be making a big mistake if they don't also take back an issue from the religious right: "family values." For the theocrats, "family values" is shorthand for the forced, governmentally sanctioned reassertion of patriarchy. How about the new family values that actually focuses on the needs of, er, the family, and of mothers in particular? And not just the Republican's fantasy of the über-mother, the "soccer mom," who can afford a minivan, a laptop, braces for her kids and trips to Disney World.

If you talk and listen to mothers around the country, guess what you find? An incipient, percolating rebellion.

Still, more than 30 years after the women's movement, we do not have a national, federally funded, decent quality daycare system in this country. We would have had one, had Richard Nixon in 1971 not vetoed the most comprehensive childcare bill ever enacted (with major bipartisan support). But Nixon and his adviser Pat Buchanan thought it was more important to bow to the right wing of the party. Thus, daycare remains a patchwork, with some of us having access to terrific centers while others, especially those in large cities, small towns or rural areas, having very few, if any, choices. In civilized countries, preschool is not seen as some "special interest" for working mothers; it's seen as a developmentally enriching

program for all kids.

If all the mothers of America were sent on a fact-finding mission, here's what we would find. In Sweden, we would see that the government requires companies to give a new mother a year's leave at 90 percent pay. It also provides nurseries for most children older than 18 months. A quick stop in Denmark would reveal that nearly half of the children under 3 are in publicly financed nurseries, and nearly 95 percent of children 3 to 6 are. On to France, where 95 percent of children aged 3 to 5 are in preschool. OK, you say, that's Europe. Well, get this. In 1984, Brazil gave workers 12 weeks of maternity leave with pay. (That's right, with pay.) Kenya mandates eight weeks of maternity leave with pay.

What we get here, instead, is backlash. Lisa Belkin's now infamous *New York Times Magazine* piece on the alleged "opt out" generation of mothers who "choose" not to work was bad enough. Now *Time* gives us the cover story "The Case for Staying Home" with the subtitle "Why more young Moms are opting out of the rat race." Interestingly, on the cover we don't see the "mom's" face at all. We see a little blond toddler dressed in white (!) hugging a mom's leg, also clad in white (!!). We don't need to see her face; her expressions, her thoughts, her desires are irrelevant. Here the fragile needy child, looking up into mom's face, makes the case for "choosing" to stay home.

Inside we learn about a supposed exodus of young mothers from the work place. A bold faced pull-quote emphasizes that there has been a 3 percent drop in the proportion of mothers with kids under 3 in the work place since 1997. (This is an "exodus"? Especially

during a recession when more than 2 million jobs have been lost?) Buried in smaller text is that fact that 72 percent of mothers with kids under 18 are in the work force. Guess why? They have to. And, many like to.

Beyond the dictatorial cover—"The Case for Staying Home"—the bulk of the article is what the real story is about: the absolute failure of the workplace and the government to support the family, especially mothers.

We mothers have no paid maternity leave, no universal health-care so that all our kids are covered, no comprehensive after-school programs, no genuine, truly revolutionary new support of our public schools that would revive them (No Child Left Behind already has become a massive joke). Too many workplaces have no onsite or nearby daycare, no flexible time, no job sharing. The right to control our own reproductive lives is under total siege.

Mothers feel they have been sold a bill of goods: We're supposed to be eternally nurturing, supportive and ecstatic about child rearing 24/7. We are never supposed to get angry, because the words "mom" and "angry" aren't supposed to go together. But if mothers in this country never got angry about how they and the nation's children were being treated, we'd still have child labor and laws discriminating against married women in the labor force. Mothers' voices have not been heard, especially during this presidential campaign season. It's about time they were. Check out two Web sites, mothersandmore.org and mothersmovement.org. And remember: Motherhood remains the unfinished business of the women's movement. ■

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\$577 a Month

BY ARIEL GORE

THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION RECENTLY informed me that I've earned enough "credits" for my child to receive \$577 per month in benefits "if you die this year."

Five hundred and seventy-seven dollars a month. It's funny. I used to get exactly that on welfare: a young broke single mom with her sweet fat baby. Five hundred and seventy-seven dollars. But that was a long time ago—before Newt explained to me "personal responsibility"; before my 21-year-old self was blamed for everything from economic decline to the moral decay of Western Civilization; before Clinton signed welfare reform while getting a blowjob from an intern; before Bush Jr. stole the White House; before my baby morphed into a teenager.

Five hundred and seventy-seven dollars a month. Was it enough? Of course not. But it was rent or utilities or food, take your pick. Five hundred and seventy-seven dollars a month: Now I have to die to get it.

When my middle-class friends started receiving their \$400 tax credits in the mail (supposed to make them turn a blind eye to the \$350 billion tax giveaway Bush Jr. handed the wealthiest Americans), I waited by my mailbox.

Mine was a working family, was it not? But, *no*? It seems that although I've been working at least 40 hours a week and earning income since I got out of school and got off welfare, I, like hundreds of thousands of low-paid military personnel, didn't earn enough to qualify mine as a "working family."

Why I entertained the fantasy that Bush would send me \$400 I can't explain. Maybe it's the same naïveté that made me imagine I could treat my daughter to a public school education and not expect military recruiters to meet her at the door when she entered middle school. Naïveté because, alas, buried deep in the No Child Left Behind Act—W's education law passed in 2001—is a provision requiring all public secondary schools to provide military recruiters with access to facilities and contact information for students.

So at the tender age of 11, despite my specific protests, my girl-child came home from school with a U.S. Navy Frisbee and an attitude that said, "Mom, you just don't understand what these nice people want to do for kids."

These nice people and their \$577 a month.

If I didn't know better, I could listen to their rhetoric and imagine that the transfer of resources in this country was from rich to poor rather than the other way around. We nanny their children. We pay

their mortgages with our rent checks. We till their fields. And when they offer us \$577 a month, they act as if they are giving us a gift. When we demand it, they say we suffer from "a sense of entitlement."

"You haven't really worked," they say.

So, if not working, what exactly have I been doing these past 33 years to earn Social Security "credits"?

Besides having a 14-year-old daughter I have to protect from Uncle Sam and the Supreme Court on a daily basis—a girl-child who grew up on welfare and food stamps but who nonetheless is apparently healthy enough to fight for a government that never fought for her—I teach high school. Yep. I work with the folks Education Secretary Rod Paige referred to as "a terrorist organization." And you thought you'd have to do more than instruct kids on the art of metaphor to be labeled an enemy combatant.

Apparently, Rod was kidding.

Not kidding was the baby-faced student who walked into my senior creative writing workshop a day later and announced that he couldn't wait to get home and tell his mama that she wouldn't have to pay his college tuition after all.

"How's that?" I piped up, imagining that this gifted student had gotten a full scholarship from the Rotary Club or the United Negro College Fund.

"I've joined the Army! My mom's been working her butt off all her life for me, but now I'm taking responsibility for my own education!"

My baby-faced student—one of just a handful I thought understood the concept of "metaphor."

"Why you trippin'?" he stammered as my face fell.

The following week, he showed up with a crew cut. And he never wrote me another metaphor.

It's almost enough to make you start rooting for the draft. At least then the children of the corporate criminals who are profiting from this war might have to go, too.

But when I turn on my television, who's the corporate criminal preparing to go to prison? It's the single mom and housewife extraordinaire—Martha Stewart—who will pay for a thousand illegal stock trades, a thousand atrocious sweatshops. The mother. The housewife. The woman so uppity as to think she was entitled to more than \$577 a month. ■

ARIEL GORE is the editor-publisher of *Hip Mama* and the author of four books including *Whatever, Mom: Hip Mama's Guide to Raising a Teenager*. Go to www.whatevermom.com.

Why I entertained
the fantasy that Bush
would send me \$400
I can't explain.

Coalition to Community

BY BARBARA RANSBY

SECOND-WAVE FEMINISM ALWAYS HAD TO GRAPPLE with questions of inclusion, democracy and power. The writings of black feminists from bell hooks to Barbara Smith lamented the condescending, patronizing and sometimes outright racist treatment they experienced in predominately white feminist circles in the '70s.

Even when racism was not there on an interpersonal level, there was a political struggle to stretch the definition of feminism from a narrow set of issues that impact all women to include racial oppression and economic exploitation. Issues like poverty, the prison system, police harassment, economic injustice and welfare, for many poor women and women of color, had to be central to any movement for liberation.

Over the past few years a number of writers have teased out the ways in which race politics are embedded in our definition and practice of feminist politics.

Liberal and radical feminists have very different histories, analyses and track records on the issues of race and class politics. Nevertheless, organizing across these lines is the persistent challenge of progressive activists in search of a common movement.

Current coalition challenges

The planners of the April 25 March for Women's Lives had to wrestle yet again with the difficult task of principled coalition-building. The American Civil Liberties Union, Black Women's Health Imperative, Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, National Organization for Women and Planned Parenthood Federation of America are the principal organizers and pooled efforts and resources to lay the groundwork. Other progressive organizations signed on as cosponsors. March organizers initially intended to focus on defending a woman's right to reproductive choice, but through input from black women's organizations the name was changed to reflect the multiple areas of oppression women face.

On April 1, a diverse group of feminists came together in Chicago for a forum organized by The Public Square to discuss the legacy and future of feminism. The event, held at the Harold Washington Library, was attended by some 300 people. Eleanor Smeal, president of Feminist Majority, was joined on stage by Lisa Jervis of *Bitch* magazine, Beth Richie, a black feminist leader of the anti-violence movement and initiator of INCITE: Radical Women of Color Against Violence, and Mary Morten, former head of The Chicago Foundation for Women, Chicago NOW and one of the conveners of a black feminist network that has been meeting in Chicago for

the last nine months. The multiple voices spanned generations, sexual orientations and race. And the issue that was front and center in the discussion was that of coalition.

Beth Richie argued that issues like the growing prison industry and its insatiable appetite for black bodies had to be central to a progressive feminist agenda because it is paramount to black communities. Mary Morten highlighted the various ways women come to embrace the term feminism and how our historical reference points are different. Lisa Jervis reminded the audience of the importance of the independent media. She started *Bitch*, which emphasizes the use of the term "bitch" as a verb not a noun, as a "young feminist response to popular culture." Without an independent media, the multiplicity of voices, whether in concert or contestation, are less likely to be heard, Jervis insisted. Eleanor Smeal spoke from her experience as former national president of NOW and a veteran of the women's movement. After insisting that feminism is not dead, or even ailing, she talked of the difficult but necessary work of coalition-building. For the first time a national march initiated by feminists reached out to more traditional civil rights groups as partners and cosponsors, including the ACLU and the NAACP. In addition, Sistersong, a black feminist organization founded by Atlanta-based human rights activist Loretta Ross, has been key in planning.

Moving politics ahead

This kind of democratic outreach and linkage is a critical step in revitalizing a unified progressive movement in this country.

Lisa Duggan's new book, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* challenges us to go even further. In it she calls for a renewed coalition of left forces that connects identity politics to the demand for economic justice, a demand muted by the politics of neoliberalism. A false separation between culture and class has made the left less adept at doing what the right and neoliberals have done: link issues of sexuality, race and gender to their corporate economy agenda. A revitalized progressive movement has to do the same but in the interest of a more egalitarian society. Feminists, people of color, and poor and working-class people have to be central to that effort Duggan insists. And I agree.

The March for Women's Lives is a single-event coalition. If we accept Duggan's challenge, it has to be an expanded and sustained process of community-building. ■

BARBARA RANSBY is associate professor of African American studies and history at the University of Illinois-Chicago and the executive director of the Public Square. She is the author of *Ella Baker* and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision.

Feminism's Future: Young feminists of color take the mic

By Daisy Hernández and Pandora L. Leong



WHEN SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY senior Erika Jackson tried to recruit fellow women of color for a new feminist group on campus, the overwhelming reply was the sneer: “white women.” Those words were code for another term: racist.

Many women of color, like their Anglo counterparts, eschew the term “feminism” while agreeing with its goals (the right to an abortion, equality in job hiring, girls’ soccer teams). But women of color also dismiss the label because the feminist movement has largely focused on the concerns of middle-class white women. This has been a loss for people of color. Likewise, it’s a loss for the movement if it expects to grow: the U.S. Census projects that the Latino and Asian- American population is expected to triple by 2050.

The “browning” of America has yet to serve as a wakeup call for feminist organizers. Attempts to address the racism of the feminist movement have largely been token efforts without lasting effects. Many young women of color still feel alienated from a mainstream feminism that doesn’t explicitly address race. One woman of color, who wishes not to be identified and is working with the March for Women’s Lives, put it this way: “We’re more than your nannies and outreach workers. We’re your future.”

Progressive movements have a long history of internal debates, but for feminists of color the question of racism and feminism isn’t about theories. It’s about determining our place in the movement. As the daughters of both the civil rights and feminist movements, we were bred on

grrlpower, identity politics, and the emotional and often financial ties to our brothers, fathers, aunties, and moms back home, back South, back in Pakistan, Mexico or other homelands. We live at the intersections of identities, the places where social movements meet, and it’s here that our feminism begins.

Organizations as obstacles

Feminism in the United States has stagnated in part because it has largely neglected a class and race analysis. Feminism can’t survive by helping women climb the corporate ladder while ignoring cuts to welfare. Family and medical leave only matter if we have jobs with benefits. Feminism has to recruit beyond college campuses.

“If the message doesn’t get broader, [communities of color] aren’t going to open their

arms," says Sang Hee Won of Family Planning Advocates in Albany, New York. "These issues don't resonate with an immigrant woman on the streets of New York City. I'm first generation. When I think of my parents, they have so many other things to think about. People are struggling with daily lives and it's especially hard to connect [traditional feminist] issues with their situation."

The priorities of national feminist organizations often are secondary to our daily struggles. Reproductive freedom has to include access to affordable healthcare and the economic opportunities to provide for the children some of us do want to have. Likewise, it's jarring to see the word "policing" on a feminist Web site and be directed to information on gender equity in police departments without mention of police brutality.

For feminists of color to identify with the mainstream movement, national organizations need to address race explicitly. Women of color always have participated but largely have remained ignored. Organizations purport to be aware but don't hire, promote, or recognize women of color as leaders. Affinity groups and special projects remain ghettoized add-ons.

"[Feminist organizations] try and are well-intentioned," says Lauren Martin, a New York activist. "They talk a lot but don't do a lot. Organizations I've worked with talk a lot about being anti-racist. [There would be] lots of trainings and in-services, but [racist] incidents that occurred would be brushed under the rug."

"Their attitude is, 'I'm going to empower you. I'm going to teach you,'" says Alma Avila-Pilchman, program manager at ACCESS, a reproductive rights organization in Oakland, California. "When the truth is we already have that power. We need to use it. We need to be listened to."

Change in leadership

The young feminists of color we interviewed called for the inclusion of women of color and low-income women in national campaigns—when the agenda is being set.

"Forming a real coalition means starting from the very beginning rather than the 'add and stir' approach," Martin says. "The beginning is when issues are defined. It doesn't work to tack our perspective on at the end and call it 'outreach.'"

Khadine Bennett, a board member of Third Wave Foundation, which supports the activism of young women, says that

feminist organizations need to share their power. "Sometimes your organization is not the best one to carry out the work," she says. "Part of the mandate from funders should be to work with people of color organizations."

More than 30 years after the first charges of racism against the movement, these young feminists believe progressive women of color need to be the leaders of national feminist groups. That the executive directors of these organizations and senior staff still are overwhelmingly white testifies to the movement's division. The professionalization of the non-profit world has deepened this divide by internalizing corporate expectations and marginalizing the involvement of women who can't afford to work for free. In pursuit of mainstream acceptance, organizations are losing touch with the grassroots that could revive feminism. There needs to be a commitment to leadership development among women of color and low-income women that includes mentoring and training.

Seeking Common Cause

The movement also should consider models already practiced by younger activists who actively seek out coalitions. "The people I know are working around anti-violence including sexuality and anti-war work and anti-globalization," says Mina Trudeau, of Hampshire College's Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program. "Our feminism is about social justice."

Election years are good moments to broaden an organization's agenda. Last fall, Erika Jackson's feminist campus group organized against Proposition 54, which would have eliminated racial classifications in California. They were the first student organization to tackle the issue, and they didn't debate whether it was a feminist issue.

"Like with public health, we talked about how it affects women of color," she says. A lack of racial classifications would hide the higher rate of low birth weight babies born to women of color. The measure was defeated in the November 2003 state election.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, a Toronto-based spoken-word artist, sees race as a central part of the work she did in counseling women who have suffered from sexual abuse and racism. "You can't deal with the abuse and not the colonialism," she says of her work with Native American women. Healing,

she adds, can often mean reconnecting to cultural pride.

Avila-Pilchman has talked to women of color "who've given up on working with white women." However, she doesn't fall into that category. "I don't think that all white women don't want to work with us. I can't think that. But how is it going to happen? When?"

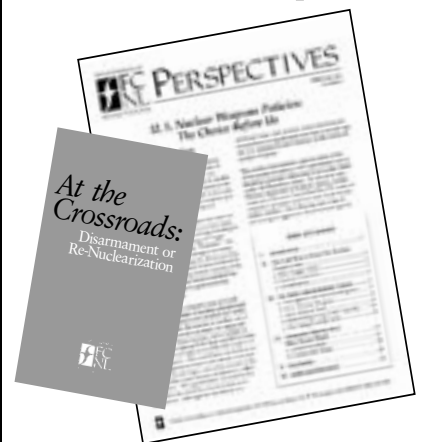
These are questions the mainstream feminist movement must answer, and some are hopeful.

Trudeau observes, "There is new visioning. Maybe this happens at all different points but at this time, we're conscious of our history and of where we want to go. I think there's some back and forth, an internal dialogue that will hopefully take us to a better place." ■

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Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)

Let Her Rip Transfeminism

BY HANNE BLANK

IT'S BEEN IN THE *NEW YORK TIMES*, SO IT MUST be official: Transpeople are here in number and they're here to stay. Transsexuals (those who medically change the hormonal and/or anatomical aspects of their biological sex) and transgendered people (those who change or redefine their gender that may not include any medical change) are, as illuminated in the March 7 *Times* article "On Campus, Rethinking Biology 101," increasingly visible and vocal, and they're out there doing shocking, subversive things—like going to college and working for appropriate living conditions on their campuses. These efforts bring up any number of issues about equal access, but also about the nature and meaning of personal attributes we're taught to think of as fixed and immutable, like sex and gender.

Trans may only now be gracing the pages of the *Times*, but it's been an issue among feminists for years. From the long-running controversy over admitting only "womyn-born-womyn" to the nearly 30-year-old Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, to whether the lesbian community is losing its butch women to transsexuality, transfolk are forcing feminism to face difficult, sometimes uncomfortable, questions.

Such questions are not only about trans people, although they're often framed that way. They're questions about the nature of feminism, about essentialism and binarism and how we should challenge oppressive ideologies of gender. The question is raised, in some quarters, of whether trans issues belong in feminism at all. Isn't it hard enough for feminists to create change without being asked to take on the cause of people who are something other than biological women?

Here's an attempt at an answer: Feminism has been fighting for generations against the notion that biology equals destiny. Do we really believe it? Or are we still clinging to a mythos that insists there's some numinous ontological essence called "man-ness" or "woman-ness"? Transfolk, increasingly numerous, loud and proud, are calling our bluff.

Some feminists worry that too much focus on transsexual issues will undermine feminism's ability to create change for women. Part of me understands the old guard fear these people-who-are-not-women will take

over some of women's hard-won space at the table. At the same time, I gently remind my trans-resisting friends that while transfolk may not be "women" by conventional definitions, neither are they "men."

There is no monopoly on oppression. In a culture that continues to put the pole of the masculine biological male on top and everything else below it, this means that biological women and transpeople share a common cause. A sex change, no matter its direction, never relieves anyone from that particular struggle. This is the very reason so many transfolk become so political. Like women, transfolk have little to lose and a great deal to gain by challenging the status quo.

Positing such challenges is our feminist birthright. Growing up, feminism's biggest gift to me was the message that people could be and do anything they wanted because it was human potential, not sex, that mattered. There were no qualifiers attached: anything. Undoubtedly most of the second-wavers who fought to offer that freedom were not thinking at the time that it might include the freedom to be another sex or gender (or none at all) or do something as radical as remodeling one's body. That's OK. First-wave feminism did not campaign for women's freedom to be lesbians, either, yet "lesbian-feminism" became one of the critical modes of the second wave.

It's all about the same basic thing: Exposing the lies of essentialism. Breaking down the essentialist wall of compulsory heterosexuality is not so different from shattering the essentialisms behind compulsory binary sex and gender, nor so different from loosening the grip of the essentialism that denied women education, jobs and the vote. If we want to see the day where that "anything" holds water, where we really judge the person and not the parts, creating a trans-inclusive feminism *must be* part of our mandate.

Adding trans to feminism is a lot like using a chainsaw for the first time. It's powerful and different and heavy and loud and, yes, scary as hell until you learn how to guide it, how to let it do what it does well. Transfeminism will take its place in the toolbox, and we will use it and use it well. Until then, we must ignore our ringing ears and buzzing teeth and continue to pick up that chainsaw, letting its roar announce our progress. ■

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March

Continued from page 25

March, right now a huge progressive coalition of civil rights, women's rights, civil liberties, labor, environmental, disability, and lesbian and gay groups are trying to stop the stacking of the federal judiciary, especially the federal courts of appeals. Of the 13 federal circuit courts of appeals, 10 already are controlled by conservative judges, and given vacancies and pending nominees, by the end of the year Republicans could gain the majority on all but one.

Senate Democrats, under immense pressure from progressive forces, have managed to use filibusters to block six of the most reactionary nominees to the federal judiciary—but 30 appeals court nominees and 142 district court nominees have been confirmed. Furthermore, President Bush recently bypassed the Senate and made recess appointments of two of the most anti-women's, civil, and reproductive rights nominees: Charles W. Pickering Sr. and William H. Pryor Jr.

Yes, it is time—long overdue—to sound the alarm that we are on the verge of losing women's fundamental rights. But more is at stake.

As go women, so go rights

In many ways, women and women's rights are the canaries in the mine. What happens to women's rights signals what's happening to a nation—a society itself. Look at Afghanistan. The atrocious restrictions, gender apartheid, enjoined by the Taliban and initially all but ignored by the rest of the world with the exception of feminist organizations, signaled something was horribly wrong there and around the globe.

If it wasn't for the Feminist Majority and the women's movement, the United States and the United Nations would have recognized the Taliban in 1998 as the official government of Afghanistan and gone on with business as usual. Instead, because of pressure from the women's movement, President Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Kofi Annan came out in March 1998 against recognition of the Taliban regime—in front of a large group of leaders from women's organizations.

The war on women's rights domestically and globally continues. The global gag rule—the first measure President Bush promulgated after being sworn in on January 21, 2001—prohibits U.S. funding in developing countries for family planning agencies that use their own money to provide women with information about abortion or even to advocate for legalization of abortion.

This is at a time when the World Health Organization estimates that more than 80,000 women die in developing nations each year from complications of illegal or unsafe abortions, and hundreds of thousands others are maimed and injured. Women seeking treatment for complications of unsafe abortions overwhelm healthcare systems in these poor countries, consuming as much as half of hospital budgets. Experts also believe the number of women dying is twice the official counts. With many women afraid or unable to seek medical treatment, their tragic deaths go uncounted.

What many people in this country don't know is that U.S. international family planning and abortion policies are contributing to the deaths of these women and girls. That's why, when we march, we will call attention to these failed U.S. policies.

Moreover, U.S. family planning aid both domestically and internationally is increasingly going to abstinence-only programs—some one-half of the aid! That's why, when we march, we will be calling attention to this shortsighted, irresponsible diversion of funds from more effective programs.

Can you imagine abstinence-only programs supported by U.S. policy in sub-Saharan Africa, where HIV/AIDS is of pandemic proportions? Where the average onset of HIV/AIDS is 25 years of age, where the average marriage age for women is in the teen years and where the face of HIV/AIDS (or its typical victim) now is a young woman?

Yes, current U.S. family planning policy is shortsighted and shamefully irresponsible. That's why we are marching. If we don't call public attention to these shameful policies costing countless women their lives, who will?

We're determined to save *Roe v. Wade*, to save family planning, to reverse the global gag rule. And we are not alone. I am proud of the diverse coalition signing on as cosponsors for the March for Women's Lives. The progressive movement is standing together to protect women's reproductive rights in the United States and abroad. As the canaries in the mine, not to mention more than half the population, we must make women's issues more visible in this critical year. Women simply cannot be left out of the public debate.

In my 30-plus years of organizing nationally, I have been a part of the leadership of many important human rights, civil rights and women's rights marches. I have seen the massive positive impact marches can have in galvanizing public opinion. Never has a march for women's rights been more important than today. We cannot—must not—continue to drift backward. We must organize to make this the largest march in women's rights history. The times call for no less. ■

ELEANOR SMEAL is president and co-founder of the Feminist Majority and publisher of *Ms. magazine*. She previously served as president of the National Organization for Women.

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A Female Giant

Edwidge Danticat was born in Haiti at the tail end of the first Duvalier dictatorship and moved to the United States in 1981 when she was 12. Her first novel, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, was published when she was 25, and a year later her collection of short stories, *Krik? Krak!*, was nominated for the National Book Award. Her newest book, *The Dew Breaker*, was released in early March and tells the story of a “dew breaker”—a government torturer—whose violent crimes in 1960s Haiti are buried beneath his new life in New York, where he is a father, a husband, a barber and a landlord. Her latest book is a departure from her previous work because it focuses mostly on men.

How has the current crisis in Haiti affected you?

Whenever there’s some sort of disruption or turmoil in Haiti it affects me because I have a lot of family in Haiti still. I’m always ... trying to make sure that my family is all right. And of course my larger concern for the country is tied to that. ... This year, 2004, is the bicentennial of Haitian independence. I’m hoping that this will really be a new start for us because history is staring us dead in the face. And now the country has a choice of either moving forward or going through these same things over and over again for the next 200 years.

How does being a woman affect your art?

I’m writing from a certain sensibility. I think having grown up surrounded by women, and for the most part very poor women, struggling women who were like giants to me, my goal has been ... to really honor who they are, to honor their sacrifices. I see ... what I do as a way to honor the types of women who raised me, the types of women who formed and shaped who I am.

—Melissa Pavolka

Young Feminist

Continued from page 27

been a Baptist. And let me tell you, when you leave Baptists, you are leaving some serious shit.

But when I got up in the morning and watched old George Bush on television talking about how he wants a constitutional amendment, I’m like, “Oh Shit. We gotta go get married.” And I noticed something, in a phrase he used four times in his talk from the Roosevelt room: “activist judges.” How many of you know an activist judge? No, no, I’m serious—I know three. They’re all dykes. One’s from Colorado and two are from California. But I don’t think that what I think of as an activist judge and what George Bush thinks of as an activist judge has any relationship to the same category.

Why do you become a feminist? Why do you grab hold of every book that speaks to your heart? Why do you want desperately to believe that there is a future? I have evidence in my own life that activism is an effective engine for change. I’ve got a banner: “Everything has been remade. Nothing has been remade. Everything is different. A

us. Think back to the first book that gave you the notion that you could change your world. Whether you define your world as George Bush’s world or your neighborhood or your family or your ex-girlfriends and the new ones you’re looking at, I guarantee the book that you picked up that “empowered” you and gave you a sense of authority in the world was almost surely a feminist text. A narrative of revolution. A piece of someone’s soul in which they spread their legs, took a strong stand and stubbornly shared with you how they had changed their own life or endured their own life or made new the life they had been handed.

Last week, because the river rose and we got cut off, we all watched TV. And it made me think, what the fuck is it gonna look like when they make the movie of our life? Let me be clear about what I envision as the future of feminism. When they come around to make the movie of your life, when someone comes around to write the biography of you, as that feminist icon or that revolutionary, world-changing activist you are about to become, for God’s sake, make it more than anything small or pretty or over-romanticized. Make it as revolution-

Why do you become a feminist? Why do you grab hold of every book that speaks to your heart? Why do you want desperately to believe that there is a future? I have evidence in my own life that activism is an effective engine for change.

little bit is different.” It’s complicated.

In 1981, I was almost fired from my job in New York City because someone from the Columbia University campus called my boss and said: “Do you know what she does at night? I can send you pictures!” My boss, an old red diaper baby, said: “Send them; I’d love to see some of that! And I’m not firing her ass!” He kept that attitude when the same people called the people who had hired him. It was all part of the tumult associated with the 1981 “Sex the Scholar” conference but we didn’t know that we were participating in a historical event. We only knew things were complicated for a while.

Things change, things stay the same, things are always in turmoil for people like

ary as this tradition in which we speak has been. Make it so dangerous that people will be scared and unnerved when they read it. Take risks. Make illegitimate children. Get lots of lovers. Try some stuff! Make some difference. Without that courage, without that outside agitation, there will be no future of feminism. There will be no change in this country.

Oh, and along the way, read some novels. ■

DOROTHY ALLISON is the author of *Bastard Out of Carolina*, *Cavedweller*, *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, and *Skin: Talking About Sex, Class and Literature*. An old dyke, she was born in Greenville, South Carolina and makes her home in northern California, with her partner Alix Layman, and her 11-year-old son, Wolf Michael.

Shareholders

Continued from page 20

shareholders to nominate directors and have those names included with proxy materials distributed by corporations. The SEC ruled that companies could ignore the proposals but ordered an internal study of the issue of easier shareholder nomination of directors that cropped up four times over the past 62 years. Last fall the SEC proposed a new rule: If 35 percent of shareholders withheld votes for a director or if 1 percent of long-term shareholders won majority support for direct shareholder nomination, in the next year 5 percent of long-term shareholders could nominate a limited number of directors.

Labor unions and public pension funds want a quicker process and lower thresholds for action, but corporate executives and groups like the Business Roundtable, a lobbying organization of the largest corporations, oppose it as disruptive, premature and, most of all, a tool for organized labor.

But unions can win against executives only if they gain support from major institutional investors. At this point, the two have common interests. "Vast amounts of wealth

have been transferred out of shareholders and workers into the corporate elite, and they both lost," Ferlauto says. "There's a real coming together of the interests of employees—who have been laid off by tens of thousands or lost benefits—and shareholders, who have lost dividends, while CEOs have concentrated wealth among themselves."

While the rule was under discussion this year, AFSCME (along with three other groups) proposed nominating a director at Marsh & McLennan, parent to the scandal-ridden Putnam Investments. Marsh & McLennan ultimately agreed to nominate a former federal prosecutor recommended by shareholders.

Indeed, Ann Yerger, deputy director of the Council of Institutional Investors that represents 140 public and private pension funds, argues that the new SEC rule will be a "tool that will be used rarely, a tool of last resort." That is because simply the prospect of shareholders nominating a director may be powerful enough to influence many boards. With a record number of resolutions, more corporations this year are reaching agreements to avoid appearing against reform, having large votes against them or facing a future fight over shareholder-nominated

director, says Melissa Moye, vice president at the union-owned Amalgamated Bank.

Yet there will still be many fights at annual meetings this spring. Public pension funds, with labor support, are mounting a major effort to withhold votes for Safeway CEO Steven Burd and two directors. The value of Safeway stock plummeted under Burd and corporate performance suffered while insiders profited. Investors also consider Safeway's attack on union members in Southern California that prompted a 138-day strike last winter to be a bad business move.

Unions and other shareholder activists are filing resolutions on such issues as revealing corporate political contributions, splitting the roles of chief executive and board chairman, accounting for the cost of stock options, imposing strict limits on corporate pay and setting clear criteria for bonuses.

This may be the beginning of a paradigm shift away from the super-CEO toward broader corporate accountability, more transparent markets and less corruption, as AFSCME Director of Corporate Affairs Michael Zucker argues. If so, capitalists should thank labor unions for making the system function better for owners and, if labor's long-term strategy succeeds, for workers as well. ■



Why March for Women's Lives on April 25?

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rights at the March for Women's Lives in Washington, DC on April 25, 2004. Please join us.



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Richard Clarke

Continued from page 21

by omission.

Which is sad, because it's precisely Clarke's status as an unabashedly hawkish but realistic (and sometimes wrong) veteran of the morally ambiguous national security world that gives his account its gravitas. In that realm, things often are bungled in the execution of policies good or bad; its people like Clarke who generally help pick up the pieces and spin the press, even if they don't fully believe themselves. But when there is the absence of actual policy—or the presence of policy dangerously at odds with reality—it offends the sensibilities of smart, knowledgeable (and, like Clarke, arrogant) civil servants who live and breathe policy they consider paramount to the national interest.

When they run into this unpleasant reality too forcefully, many simply quit and keep to themselves—mere GS-12s know that being publicly critical even once they've left is an endeavor fraught with peril. I'm sure Clarke was well aware of what was to follow from his decisions—he's willing to risk a lot of long-term unpleasantness—because his book reads like it was written by a true civil servant. His motivations might be characterized as conservative in the best sense: He doesn't like seeing capital—political, financial, human—mis-spent. And it doesn't take much space for him to explain, with unadorned clarity, how the current Bush administration has wasted spirit, blood and treasure. (Of 11 chapters, only two are devoted to the W years.) Nor does he require much space to carefully assign responsibility for national security failures intrinsic and systematic.

But the primary utility of *Against All Enemies* lays not so much in the summations of failure and prescriptions for reform but in a storyline that explains how we came to be where

we are today. For those citizens who have spent the post-Cold War days happily ignorant of the generalities and specifics of how the national security components of their government operate, it's an eminently useful and accessible primer on how strands of intransigence, myopia, and lack of leadership and new ideas have come to make up the rope the current administration has slipped around the neck of sound national security and foreign policy. For those already steeped in those realms, it's merely more validation of worst-case assumptions.

Not only does Clarke narrate an engaging tour of institutional recalcitrance and pettiness that most rightly assume is intrinsic to bureaucracy (the painfully slow evolution of making al Qaeda a priority; of FBI-CIA cooperation on al Qaeda; of ponying up money from jealously guarded budgets for innovative endeavors), he confirms that the hawks of the current administration are hopelessly stuck in the past. Though his characterization of Rice isn't quite as piquant as what one former colleague of hers told me several years ago ("She hasn't had a new idea in her head since 1989"), key is his briefly mentioned realization that neither the new national security adviser nor her deputy had "worked on the new post-Cold War security issues," as is his weary recollection of daily NSC staff meetings "filled with detailed discussion about the ABM Treaty and other issues that I thought were vestigial Cold War concerns." Indeed, if one looked at what most of the national security political appointees were doing for right-wing think tanks during the '90s, they seemed intent on continuing to fight a modified vision of the Cold War, ob-

sessed with ways to both tie up loose ends (i.e., Fidel Castro) or find a new polarization of nation-states status quo.

And even in the wake of the bombings of U.S. embassies and an American warship, al Qaeda's terrorism was hardly on this crew's radar. After 9/11, Clarke once again confirms the worst, reporting that the ideologues could see only the tragedy through the retrospective prism of Iraq and Saddam Hussein. Perhaps most disturbing about Clarke's account is the cool certainty with which ideologues like Paul Wolfowitz discuss their warped view of reality and condescend to the career professionals who have been working al Qaeda and Iraq for years. One wishes one could have seen Clarke's face when Wolfowitz—back in government just five months after nearly a decade of dwelling in the ivory tower of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Stud-

ies (SAIS)—champions the daffy notions of right-wing conspiracy maven Laurie Mylroie, telling Clarke: "You give bin Laden too much credit. He could not do all these things like the 1993 attack on New York, not without a state sponsor."

Clarke ends his book noting that he and his former colleagues are now teaching graduate students, "hoping we can help the next generation of national security managers to understand the dangers of simplistic and unilateral approaches to counter terrorism." One cannot help but rue the fact that Clarke wasn't teaching before—perhaps at SAIS, where Wolfowitz and others might have learned a thing or two had they sat in on his class. ■

JASON VEST, who specializes in national security issues, is a contributing editor at *In These Times* and is a senior correspondent for *The American Prospect*.

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BY LISA YUN LEE

Who's Afraid of Theory?

Ivory-tower feminism has a bad rap: It's perceived as convoluted and theoretical, mired in jargon and intellectual elitism and, frankly, a big bunch of mumbo-jumbo. Compared to the vigorous, policy-changing, dynamic

nature of grassroots activism, theory seems constipated, static and pretentious. Clearly, the woman's movement is advanced more by volunteering as an escort at an abortion clinic or participating in the exuberance of the March for Women's Lives in Washington than by spending an agonizing afternoon deciphering paragraph-long sentences.

Or is it?

Disdain for academic feminism reached its apogee during the 1998 Bad Writing Contest. Sponsored by *The Journal of Philosophy and Literature*, this annual (but now defunct) tongue-in-cheek competition recognizes "the most stylistically lamentable passages found in scholarly books and articles published in the last

few years." When Judith Butler, feminist theorist and professor at the University of California, Berkeley, won the contest that year, it was more fuel for conservative attacks on feminist scholarship and the abandonment of traditional standards and subjects at universities.

It is hard to defend Butler's first-prize passage, from an article published in the scholarly journal *Diacritics*, as anything but confounding and opaque:

The move from a structuralist account in which capital is understood to structure social relationships in relatively homologous ways to a view of hegemony in which power relations are subject to repetition, convergence and rearticulation brought the question of temporality into the thinking of structure, and marked a shift from

a form of Althusserian theory that takes structural totalities as theoretical objects to one in which the insights into the contingent possibility of structure inaugurate a renewed conception of hegemony as bound up with the contingent sites and strategies of the rearticulation of power.

However, “bad” writing too often is equated with difficult and complex writing. Language is never a simply neutral vehicle for a message; it is a battleground and a site of power, resistance and struggle. Feminist theorists long have challenged language through use of unconventional syntax, bad grammar and neologisms in order to convey something new and disquieting.

Examples are legion—from the simple act of replacing the pronoun “he” to “she” in a sentence (unveiling the hidden agendas of language), to radical theologian Mary Daly’s observation that “therapist” can be hyphenated to be read as “the-rapist” (symbolically pointing to how psychoanalysis attempts to portray female anger and rebellion as hysteria), to the renaming of the word “history” to “herstory” (reflecting how women have been written out of the main historical narrative). Feminist language-play can be hysterical, yes, but also rich and revealing.

But many feminists have questioned these efforts. After the Bad Writing Contest debacle, it was Martha Nussbaum, a well-regarded feminist philosopher and professor of law and ethics at the University of Chicago, who followed up with a long attack on Butler in *The New Republic*. Her piece exposed a thorny debate within feminism and the women’s movement: theory vs. practice.

“It is difficult to come to grips with Butler’s ideas, because it is difficult to figure out what they are,” Nussbaum writes. “Hungry women are not fed by

this, battered women are not sheltered by it, raped women do not find justice in it, gays and lesbians do not achieve legal protection through it.”

It seems reasonable to question what it means to be “socially relevant,” as if we all agree on what this rather fuzzy notion entails. But making the production of knowledge subordinate to how useful and practical it can be is extremely shortsighted. We should not limit the idea of social transformation to immediately identifiable social justice goals. Readily obvious political ends may not unleash the imagination that is required for true liberation. Even as we need to have marches on Washington, develop grassroots strategies for coalition building and push for policy reform, we also need conceptual tools to battle sexism and oppression.

By examining some of the thinkers working in the Ivory Tower, we can see that their accomplishments and influence illustrate the fluidity between what’s perceived as a rigid divide between theory and practice. These women provide a much-needed service by unleashing a radical imagination.

Judith Butler

A professor of rhetoric and comparative literature at Berkeley, Butler is most famous for promoting the notion of “performativity” and for rousing what she calls “gender trouble.” Unsatisfied with the entrenched feminist description of the social construction of gender, Butler calls upon the main metaphor of “drag.” Butler argues that all of us enact behaviors associated with masculinity and femininity, and in this way gender is a kind of performance or disguise. Butler suggests that, unlike theatrical acting, there is no stable actor or subject that goes about performing gender roles. It is the very act of performing that constitutes who we are.

Butler argues that even as feminists helped to reject the idea that biology is destiny, they continued to assume a gendered identity built upon the essential nature of male and female sexed bodies. She proposes a different kind of politics—not based on a utopian future but on everyday subversive actions that promote “gender trouble.” (Thus, the title of her most influential work, *Gender Trouble*, published in 1990.)

She suggests it is the subversion, mystification, confusion and proliferation of many genders—not just male and female but everything in between—that would be really liberating. The useful concept of performativity has gone beyond how we think about gender to help us understand oppressive forms of identity, such as nationality.

Gayatri Spivak

The Avalon Foundation Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University, Spivak was born in Calcutta in 1942 and belongs to the first generation of Indian intellectuals after independence. She is most well-known for her work around the “Subaltern,” a stand in for Antonio Gramsci’s “proletarian.” The Subaltern refers to the most dispossessed and disenfranchised, without a voice in society.

In her 1985 article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Spivak examines how people working for social change unintentionally reinforce political domination, economic exploitation and cultural erasure, the very same tactics employed by colonial empires.

Those in power speak for the Subaltern and allow the dispossessed (continued on page 42)

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BY TRACY VAN SLYKE

A Woman of Mystery

Author Sara Paretsky broke ground in contemporary mystery writing with the 1982 debut of *V.I. Warshawski*, a tough-talking, hard-boiled and independent female detective. Through her character, Paretsky opened the

door for female protagonists and readers, showing that the genre wasn't just for men anymore. More than 20 years later, mystery fans can walk into any bookstore and see female authors and characters dominating the shelves.

Throughout a dozen books, *Warshawski* has become a character that millions devotedly follow. Much of this loyalty comes from her strengths, flaws and vulnerabilities—characteristics with which readers readily identify. In the course of her investigations and butt kicking, Warshawski gets hurt, becomes sick, makes bad decisions, gets cranky, worries about bills and most of the time doesn't care or have time for makeup or fine clothes.

"I created her very much because I was tired of the way women were depicted in the traditional American noir form," Paretsky says. "Either existing only in the body or

Blacklist
By Sara Paretsky
Putnam
415 pages, \$24.95

being chaste ... and therefore unable to solve the most fundamental problems of their lives—or being sexually active and therefore being wicked."

Paretsky's quest to redefine crime writing has extended beyond the page. Understanding the barriers that women authors face to get their work recognized, in 1986 Paretsky helped found Sisters in Crime (www.sistersincrime.org). The 3,600-member organization helps female mystery writers gain the attention of publishers, critics and readers and "combat[s] discrimination against women in the mystery field."

While many writers of the crime genre claim their stories are ripped from the headlines, Paretsky imbues her character

with her own feminist sensibilities and anxieties. This gives her work a more "real" quality than much fiction, and even mainstream news media, often commands.

In previous books, her characters confronted the Holocaust, homelessness and corruption in the prison system. And although she didn't set out to write an overtly political book this time, her latest novel, *Blacklist*, takes place soon after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan.

Paretsky originally intended to write about a crime committed during the McCarthy era but was pulled toward the overwhelming parallels between that time and the current political climate. With America still reeling from 9/11, in *Blacklist* Warshawski confronts the USA Patriot Act, hides a young fugitive accused of terrorism and ducks the FBI.

"I started writing it right about the time of the attack

on the World Trade Center," Paretsky explains. "I was pretty much like everyone else in the country, in a state of shock and numbness and having a hard time getting moving. So I started a story that would let me retreat a little from the present ... but as I was working on the novel, of course, the events of the day were not remote."

During the last half of the novel, Warshawski contends with the state threatening her constitutional rights—searching her home, tapping her phone and following her car, all without a warrant. As the P.I. evades the FBI, readers are confronted with the ways the government can invade one's privacy—as much in fiction as in real life.

"When my computer crashed and I lost all my e-mails, my husband said, 'Why don't you write to John Ashcroft and ask him for copy?' And we were both laughing, but you know, it could be true," Paretsky says. "I have a friend who works for the American Friends Service Committee [a faith-based social change organization] ... and he was in the office the day they found out that someone on their staff was actually an undercover cop who had walked off with all their emails. This is four weeks ago, not 40 years ago."

Paretsky's ability to combine the imaginative with the authentic explains why her books will remain relevant, even if always relegated to popular fiction bookshelves. At the root of all successful crime novels, Paretsky says, is fear—and Paretsky's, as well as many others, is at the center of *Blacklist*.

"I'm as nervous and anxious about these uncertain times as anyone else and I get more afraid every day as we seem to be spiraling more and more out of control," says the writer. "The trouble with these times is that I don't trust my own judgment, but I certainly don't trust the judgment of the administration, either." ■



BY EMILY UDELL

Pink Bloque Party

“2 Cute 2 B Arrested” blazed across the cotton candy-colored sweatshirts of the members of the group Pink Bloque when thousands of people gathered March 20 in downtown Chicago to protest the one-year anniversary

of the war on Iraq. Pink Bloque joined the crowd in full fuchsia ensemble, dancing to the beat of Top 40 hit “Hey Ya” by Outkast.

In the wake of 9/11, a group of Chicago-based friends formed the activist dance troupe to give the look of protests an extreme makeover. They use pink clothing and pop songs to spark political conversation and to challenge the stereotype of protesters as bandana-clad anarchists or peace sign-waving hippies. Since 2002 this group of radical feminists has coordinated actions to educate people on issues ranging from date rape to the USA PATRIOT Act.

“American pop culture is part

of the ambiance of our lives,” says Pink Bloque member Dara Greenwald. “Sometimes we joke around that more people can pick out J-Lo in a lineup than Dick Cheney.”

Pink Bloque draws on public fascination with pop culture to attract people who might otherwise be intimidated by protesters and to open them up to political dialogue. Pink Bloque uses popular music in an effort to associate seemingly vapid songs with messages of social justice: Donna Summer’s disco hit “She Works Hard for the Money” was the soundtrack for a May Day demonstration highlighting gender wage inequity and Nelly’s “Hot in

Herre” [sic] was used to signify the pressure on immigrants after 9/11.

Contextualization is integral to Pink Bloque’s approach. They addressed threats to civil liberties and the USA PATRIOT Act at the Taste of Chicago festival on the Fourth of July. They danced outside popular bars in the Wicker Park neighborhood of Chicago and showered the patrons with fliers about date rape. “By showing up in spaces where we’re not expected, not technically sanctioned to be ... we turn public space back into a space for dialogue, not just for shopping,” says Pink Bloque member Kate Dougherty.

Humor and fun are part of Pink Bloque’s strategy to attract members and to sustain a sense of community within the collective. The lighthearted approach also deescalates tension at protests.

Pink Bloque member Jane Ball says that police at rallies often smile and laugh at their antics. “I think it really brings their level down,” Ball says. “They’re not as tense [because] they know we’re not going to try and hurt them or pelt them with anything.”

The group has taken its act on the road, hosting workshops in several cities on the East Coast last summer during their “Unjustified” tour. Pink-clad workshop participants learned about Pink Bloque philosophy, tactics and the “unifying force of the radical booty shake.”

Pink Bloque members see themselves as part of a tradition of creative resistance that includes the pageantry of the Suffragettes, Bread and Puppet Theater and ACT UP’s AIDS awareness activism that parodied corporate advertising. They locate their feminism within a complex progressive movement. “All oppressions are intertwined. You can’t talk about gender oppression without talking about racial oppression, without talking about class oppression. All those things are so wrapped up in one another that teasing out what’s what is impossible,” Dougherty says.

Pink Bloque has several events planned this year. Their next action will be to storm the capital—in pink, of course—April 25 during the March for Women’s Lives in Washington.

Greenwald puts it this way: “We are committed to challenging the white supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal empire one street dance at a time.” ■

For more information on Pink Bloque, go to www.pinkbloque.org.



BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

Doc of Hazzard

There's a lot of story in *Love and Diane*, a frank, unaffected look inside one battered African-American family. It's heartbreaking, inspiring and all true.

Diane Hazzard was one of those statistics in the crack epidemic of the '80s, and she took her children down with her. Now, after years of her rehab and their foster care, her children are back. But following a few rosy days, the hard times begin, kicked off by her daughter Love. Love is 18, HIV-positive and the new mother of Donyaeh. She is crazy in love with Donyaeh, angry about her years in foster care and depressed about her future.

Will the tragedies of Diane's generation be visited upon Donyaeh's? That's the question that drives *Love and Diane*, which will be shown April 21 (but check local public TV listings) on the public TV documentary series "P.O.V." Director Jennifer Dworkin spent nearly a decade following the story.

Diane gets help from the government, including an apartment, training and a job. Of course, today's help doesn't necessarily fix the injuries

that linger on into the present from the past. Even worse, it can sometimes create new problems. For example, when Love gets violent one day, Diane calls social services to get help for her. Instead, Donyaeh is whisked away to foster care, where his social service lawyer is AWOL. Still, *Love and Diane* has some happy endings, even though we know that on the way to them more scars will accumulate.

The film is compelling and defined by its complex themes. The most powerful is the bond between mother and daughter. Love and Diane scrap constantly, but they never give up on each other—and their relationship strikes a chord with people of all skin colors, classes and regions. For the story to resonate, all you need is to have a mother and to have been hurt.

This family is vastly imperfect, yet it is essential to everyone in it. Family-based solutions except in the direst situations—like Diane's abandonment of her children in the '80s—seem the best of an imperfect lot. The damage done by neglect and abandonment echoes through a lifetime, we see. At the same time, good faith moves mountains.

Who's responsible for the renaissance of this troubled family? Diane is an indomitable character who's internalized her rehab lessons and won't give up on herself or her kids. But she can't do it alone. Diane and her family rely upon social services yet struggle not to be reduced to pawns in a network that is arbitrary and inflexible, yet caring.

There's a church, barely seen in the film but clearly important to Diane. And invisibly but importantly, the camera acts as a kind of anchor, reminding the family it has a story to tell. Each

of these battles records the unpredictable brutality of poverty.

But *Love and Diane* is not one more example of the way black people only seem to get special access to screen time if they're poor, on welfare or screwing up. What rescues the film is that, like the classic *Hoop Dreams*, it shows manifest respect for its subjects and trusts the audience's ability to regard them as people. It's not a how-to movie for social service workers or a morality tale for the rest of us: It's an invitation to step inside a story that's usually known to outsiders only by crude labels.

The film succeeds (once again, like *Hoop Dreams*) because of long-cultivated relationships of trust. Diane Hazzard met Jennifer Dworkin via relatives in a Harlem homeless shelter where Dworkin was volunteering. Dworkin starting filming "as a home movie." As she decided to develop her project, Hazzard agreed, hoping that Dworkin's work might help other people. It was funds from public TV's Independent Television Service and from feminist distributor Women Make Movies that finally turned the project into a TV program. And then the film started capturing festival recognition and awards (Locarno, Italy; Fullframe Documentary Festival; and the IFC Independent Spirit awards among others).

The version on "P.O.V." is shorter than the feature festival film, but it's lost nothing in the thoughtfulness of the telling. This special-event airing on the noted TV series is accompanied, as usual for "P.O.V.," with a rich Web site of background materials and a chance to chat about the film with the filmmaker and other viewers. "P.O.V."s regular summer season begins again in June, with more award-winning films that tell stories we can't imagine until we see. ■

BY GARY GACH

Making Peace

Maxine Hong Kingston's long-anticipated *The Fifth Book of Peace* (*T5BP*) just might be the first masterpiece of the 21st Century, a marvelous model for the juicy potentiality of our new millennium.

Until now peace has been seen as a mere hiatus between wars. Things change. In February 2003, massive spontaneous demonstrations broke out across the planet, preemptively decrying the war in Iraq as an interruption of peace. Unprecedented.

So *T5BP* is curious because, as its subject is peace, there's next to nothing to compare it to. Our tendency is to emphasize the first half of the *War and Peace* equation. World literature abounds with classics about war, whereas instances of peace make us pause to consider what a rare bird it truly is.

Fittingly then, the book defies categorization, combining memoir, fiction and journalism, with each clearly delineated. The net effect calls into question not only division of genres but the very concept of separation.

The book's plot is a search for peace that proves transformative in the process. The opening is as heart-stoppingly harrowing as any war diary, with the author caught in a landscape of overwhelming panic and loss. A firestorm ravages her home in the Oakland hills, destroying whole neighborhoods and killing several dozen people. So this book of peace begins at its opposite, with a blaze consuming

The Fifth Book of Peace
By Maxine Hong Kingston
Alfred A. Knopf
401 pages, \$26.00

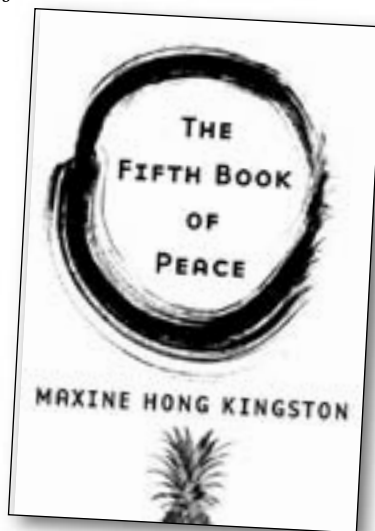
everything in its path and creating its own boundaries as it devours the oxygen, the homes and the lives surrounding it.

This initiatory section, called "Fire," is followed by "Paper," "Water" and "Earth." Using four elements as an organizational principle gives the book a clear design to meditate on, with each element serving as a pictogram written large over the four entrances of this giant temple of words. The elements are, by definition, primary and essential but not discrete: As they interact and interreact, a grander cumulative design emerges.

"Paper" (element of regeneration, wood) is an extended meditation on writing, centered on the author's manuscript consumed in the blaze. As *The Fourth Book of Peace*, it aimed to continue the Three Books of Peace of Chinese legend whose destruction she explains. "At kingdoms' rise and fall," she writes, "the new king would cut out the historians' tongues. Writers had to set fire to their own books, and be burned to death in the book

fire. Historians whose tongue stumps were cauterized lived on. They made dumb gestures that could not express subtle, complex ideas, such as descriptions of the way the world has never been but might be."

The next section, "Water,"



revives Whitman Sing, protagonist of Kingston's novel, *Tripmaster Monkey*, who now moves to Hawaii to avoid being drafted to fight his fellow Asians in Vietnam. But even island paradises know of war. If no man is an island, no island is an island, either; its connections simply occur underwater. "Water" ends with the creation

of a community of resistance.

The book's finale, "Earth," documents the author's creation of a writing workshop for veterans, where she begins her manuscript again. With this innovative leap, Kingston liberates herself from the customary isolation of writing. Not only a writing workshop, this spiritual community practices Buddhism in the tradition of the Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, a pacifist Zen master in exile from Vietnam. Veterans who'd lost their souls in Vietnam now reclaim them through the teachings of a former "enemy." Their stories form a fitting climax to the book.

(Some of their stories even continue beyond the book's borders: John Mulligan's memoir *Shopping Cart Soldiers* is now published, and Jim Janko's work is due out soon.)

Here we see we're all veterans, all touched by war, directly or indirectly. *T5BP* shows how war trauma can be healed in a community by making it conscious (through words), and by becoming conscious of being conscious (through meditation). And by seeing our common humanity, in our shared capacity for peace, love and understanding.

So perhaps, peace too is an art. The book invites and engages the reader to consider imagining something that hasn't been before (a book of peace, or peace itself). Or maybe to simply recognize something that is already here, awaiting us to make it manifest.

Indeed, Kingston closes with a stirring call to action: "Children! Everybody! Here's what to do during war. In a time of destruction, create something: a poem, a parade, a community, a school, a vow, a moral principle; one peaceful moment." ■

GARY GACH is author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Understanding Buddhism* and editor of the American Book Award-winning *What Book!?*—Buddha Poems from Beat to Hip hop.

Theory

Continued from page 37

to form a dependence on Western intellectuals rather than allowing them to speak for themselves. Spivak also points out how Westerners are guilty of assuming a cultural solidarity among groups of ethnic people. Instead, Spivak suggests, we should work against what is keeping the Subaltern down and out, thereby allowing them to speak for themselves.

Spivak is a guerilla-strategist who employs Marxist, feminist, post-colonialist and deconstructionist methods. Her writing echoes Jane Addams' recognition that social progress "depends as much on the process through which it is secured as the goals."

Many of the current debates about the audacious character of U.S. imperialistic policies and justifications for regime change are informed by Spivak's insights. For example, when the United States presents itself as the savior of oppressed women under the Taliban, it uncomfortably

challenges scientists to conduct research from the standpoint of the subjected.

She shows how when one severs the ties to value neutrality it makes it possible to insert responsibility and accountability, missing from the puzzle of why science has up to now been used mainly as a tool of power, as opposed to fighting it.

Harding challenges the scientific community to pay attention to who generates the research questions and how scientists conduct research. Her work helped pave the way for the required inclusion of women and minorities in clinical research. It was only in 1993, with the National Institutes of Health Revitalization Act, that this requirement could be legally enforced.

Catherine A. MacKinnon

A professor of law at the University of Michigan, MacKinnon moves with ease among her jobs as lawyer, teacher, writer, activist and expert on equality. Since the '70s MacKinnon has been on the frontlines

speech, arguing that both enact and incite abuse. Like the burning of a cross on a lawn, MacKinnon writes, pornography is a threatening and intimidating act of violence and subjugation. Unlike speech that communicates an idea, thought or emotion, pornography legitimates and enforces widespread criminal behavior, such as rape and beatings. As an example, she argues that no one can say

tions of reproductive rights. While white women have been fighting for their freedom from compulsory motherhood, black women have had to demand their right to procreate at all.

In her brilliant book, *Killing the Black Body*, she gives a historical overview of black motherhood, beginning when children born to slaves were given to their owners, through current policies that put family

'Bad' writing too often is equated with difficult and complex writing.

"kill" to a trained attack dog and escape prosecution for the ensuing attack on the grounds that she was "only talking."

MacKinnon also popularized the controversial notion that there are multiple ways of being coerced. Being forced at gunpoint to take part in a pornographic film, for example, is just the more extreme end of a spectrum of coercive means—one that also includes economic coercion that forces women to take part because of a lack of financial options.

Critics see MacKinnon's work as prelude to so-called "victim-feminism," where women lack agency for self-determination.

More recently, MacKinnon represented Muslim and Croat Bosnian women—survivors of Serbian genocidal sexual atrocities—and won \$745 million in damages from a New York jury. Her arguments pioneered the recognition of rape as an act of genocide under international law. (See *Kadic v. Karadzic*.)

Dorothy Roberts

Kirkland and Ellis Professor at Northwestern Law University, Roberts has shown there is a deeply embedded racism in one-dimensional interpreta-

tions on welfare recipients. She effectively proves that curtailing black motherhood is part of a historical narrative and chastises the women's movement for failing to see how distributing Norplant and Depo-Provera to poor women of color can be oppressive.

Roberts also takes on the fertility industry, which caters to middle-class white couples—reporting that when black couples go to fertility doctors they are heavily pressured to adopt. She notes the contradiction of a society that celebrates the births of seven children to a white couple resulting from fertility technologies yet refuses to pay the expenses for additional child born to welfare mothers.

The influence of Robert's work on race and reproduction is clear in the organization of the March for Women's Lives, which began with controversy over the inclusion of women of color and resulted in serious coalition building and a change from its previous name, March for Choice. ■

LISA YUN LEE is cofounder of *The Public Square*, a nonprofit organization that fosters the exchange of ideas about cultural, social and political issues. She also is working on a book about Theodor Adorno for Routledge.

These women provide a much-needed service by unleashing a radical imagination.

revisits the colonial agenda, or in Spivak's pithy formulation: "White men saving brown women from brown men."

Sandra Harding

A professor of Social Sciences and Comparative Education at UCLA, Harding was one of the first to raise questions about scientific objectivity and argue that it should be replaced with a "feminist standpoint." This position argues that the world is socially constructed and made up of multiple realities, and

arguing that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Working with Andrea Dworkin, she also conceived of and wrote controversial ordinances recognizing pornography as a violation of civil rights.

MacKinnon points out the constitutional conflict between First Amendment concerns and the Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection clause. MacKinnon argues that freedom of speech allows more powerful speakers to dominate.

In 1996's *Only Words*, she links pornography and hate

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www.socialistalternative.org

DRUG WAR REMIX COMPETITION

Sponsored by Students for Sensible Drug Policy
MAY DAY 8 pm – buddY

Television commercials and educational videos are the strongest tools of the War on Drugs. Long time coming is the cultural response from the D.A.R.E. Generation, who has been bombarded with messages like "drugs equal terrorism," and "this is your brain on drugs, any questions?" all the while being used as the primary excuse to justify racist public policies.

The Drug War Remix Competition will culminate into one evening of discussions, projections and prize giveaways.

Prize give-aways and screenings of the best submissions will be held at buddY on May Day (5-1-04) in conjunction with the Version Festival. buddY is located at 1542 N. Milwaukee Ave. Chicago, IL.

This competition is accepting submissions from around the world and in any language. The guidelines are:

RUNNING TIME Between 5 seconds and 10 minutes.

FORMAT NTSC VHS, NTSC Mini DV, 16mm or 35mm film. Sound only submissions will also be accepted on CD or Cassette tape

CONTENT Contains a minimum of 5 seconds of non-original Drug War messaging, original footage can be included as long as other guidelines are met

DEADLINE All submissions must be received by April 30, 2004

THERE IS NO SUBMISSION FEE.

Please send entries to Caton Volk at 1542 N. Milwaukee Ave. 2nd floor Chicago, IL 60622

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Ask Emma

Continued from back cover

and substance of life in all its complexities, by freeing herself from the fear of public opinion and public condemnation. Only that, and not the ballot will set the woman free, will make her a force hitherto unknown in the world, a force for real love, for peace, for harmony; a force of divine fire, of life-giving; a creator of free man and women."

*In Solidarity,
Emma*

Dear Emma,

In his State of the Union address, President Bush asked Congress to double the funding for "abstinence-only" sex education, citing the need "to counter the negative influence of the culture, and to send the right messages to our children." I'm no fan of Bush, but considering the willingness of our female pop stars to exploit themselves—with the full complicity of the media—I feel something needs to be done to give our children an alternative to our networks' current All Sex, All the Time.

Could abstinence be the answer?

Befuddled in Boise

Dear Befuddled,

"Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. It is therefore almost inevitable that she should pay for her right to exist, to keep a position in whatever line, with sex favors. ...

"It is a conceded fact that woman is being reared as a sex commodity, and yet she is kept in absolute ignorance of the meaning and importance of sex. Everything dealing with that subject is suppressed, and persons who attempt to bring light into this terrible darkness are persecuted and thrown into prison. Yet it ... is due to this ignorance that the entire life and nature of the girl is thwarted and crippled. We have long ago taken it as a self-evident fact that the boy may follow the call of the wild; that is to say, that the boy may, as soon as his sex nature asserts itself, satisfy that nature; but our moralists are scandalized at the very thought that the nature of a girl should assert itself."

*In Solidarity,
Emma*

Dear Emma,

As you were one of the most radical activists of the past two centuries, I'm sure you're just as angry as I am about the Bush administration's attempts

Women's development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself.

to constitutionally ban same-sex marriages. Isn't what gives marriage its "sanctity" the love shared by the two parties who enter into the institution, regardless of their gender?

Sizzling in San Francisco

Dear Sizzling,

"Love, the strongest and deepest element in all life, the harbinger of hope, of joy, of ecstasy; love, the defier of all laws, of all conventions; love, the freest,

the most powerful moulder of human destiny; how can such an all-compelling force be synonymous with the poor little State and Church-begotten weed, marriage?

"Some day, some day men and women will rise, they will reach the mountain peak, they will meet big and strong and free, ready to receive, to partake, and to bask in the golden rays of love. What fancy, what imagination, what poetic genius can foresee even approximately the potentialities of such a force in the life of men and women. If the world is ever to give birth to true companionship and oneness, not marriage, but love will be the parent."

*In Solidarity,
Emma*

EMMA GOLDMAN (1869-1940) was a nurse, anarchist, lecturer and revolutionary, who was twice arrested for violating the Comstock Law, which prohibited the distribution of birth-control literature. The preceding "answers" first appeared, respectively, in "Woman's Suffrage" (1914), "The Traffic in Women" (1910) and "Marriage and Love" (1916).

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

SLIME AND DEFEND

A HIGH-RANKING INSIDER RELEASES A HARSHLY CRITICAL MEMOIR.

SIR--WHATEVER INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE A BOOK DENOUNCING YOUR OWN ADMINISTRATION?

WELL, LESLIE, WE REALLY ARE A BUNCH OF INCOMPETENT BUFFOONS--AND I JUST COULDN'T KEEP QUIET ANY LONGER!



HIS MOTIVES ARE IMPUGNED.

MR. BUSH IS CLEARLY TRYING TO DISTANCE HIMSELF FROM HIS INCREASINGLY UNPOPULAR ADMINISTRATION! THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A CYNICAL ELECTION-YEAR PLOY!

AND HE'S JUST IN IT FOR THE MONEY.



THE ADMINISTRATION GOES ON THE ATTACK.

THE PRESIDENT IS SIMPLY DISGRUNTLED. AND EVERYONE KNOWS YOU CAN'T TRUST A DISGRUNTLED PERSON!

WHY IS HE DISGRUNTLED, SCOTT?

ER--BECAUSE HE LACKS GRUNTLEDNESS!



HIS EXPERTISE IS QUESTIONED.

LOOK, THE GUY'S JUST A FIGURE-HEAD! HE HAS ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HIM!

HE'S TOTALLY OUT OF THE LOOP!



THE AUTHOR'S ALLEGATIONS ARE FLATLY DENIED.

MR. RUMSFELD, IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU ARE A BIPEDEAL, CARBON-BASED LIFE FORM!

WELL, THAT'S SIMPLY NOT TRUE! END OF DISCUSSION!

DO PEOPLE WRITE CRAZY THINGS?

THEY SURE DO!



AND OF COURSE, ANY INCONSISTENCIES IN HIS ACCOUNT ARE USED TO DISCREDIT HIM.

HE CLAIMS TO BE "PRESIDENT"-- BUT HE ACTUALLY LOST THE POPULAR VOTE!

SO WHY SHOULD ANYONE BELIEVE ANYTHING ELSE HE SAYS?





Ask Emma

Dear Emma,

With his recent signing of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, President George W. Bush has taken yet another step toward outlawing abortion. John Kerry, however, is a staunch advocate for pro-choice. Aren't you excited about electing a president this November who will help to insure that a woman's body remains her own?

Kerry-Crazed in Connecticut

Dear Kerry-Crazed,

"Women's development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right to anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them; by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer. That is, by trying to learn the meaning

◀ (continued on page 47)